

Kentucky Teacher

April / May 2004

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

www.education.ky.gov



Photo by Rick McComb

Getting a guided tour

Jessamine Early Learning Village teacher Stacy Greene gives 3-year-old Conner Stutsman a tour of his new school. At its April board meeting, the Kentucky Board of Education set the per-child rates for the nearly 16,700 children in the state-funded preschool program. (See story on this page.)

State board OKs review of CATS

At its April meeting, the Kentucky Board of Education made decisions on a number of items, including the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS), preschool funding and local school district issues.

The board approved changes to align the state's classification of "dropout" with the National Council of Education Statistics' (NCES) definition of a dropout. Currently, any stu-

dent who withdraws from school, enrolls in an adult GED program and subsequently receives a GED diploma is considered a dropout in Kentucky. The new policy passed by the board would not count a student as a dropout if the student drops out of school and obtains a GED by Oct. 1 of the following school year.

Additionally, the state board approved the creation of a state-approved secondary GED

program. The Kentucky Department of Education will develop minimum standards, requirements and guidelines for a secondary GED program.

CATS review

Even though Kentucky's current assessment and accountability system (CATS) is one of only eight in the nation to receive a grade of "A" in 2004 from *Education Week*, the

See **STATE** on page 9

Legislative summary

A review of selected 2004 education legislation

Kentucky lawmakers passed the following education-related bills during the 2004 General Assembly, and Gov. Ernie Fletcher has signed the bills into law. Unless otherwise indicated, the laws go into effect July 13.

These summaries offer highlights from the bills, listed by number as a Senate Bill (SB), Senate Joint Resolution (SJR), House Bill (HB) or House Joint Resolution (HJR). For the full text of a bill, go to www.lrc.state.ky.us/record/04rs/record.htm on the Internet.

Governance

Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB)

Certification: Makes changes in the alternative certificate granted for persons with exceptional work experience. Prohibits counting an adjunct instructor certificate as "highly qualified" under the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Makes such a certificate granted to a teacher completing a university alternative program valid for a maximum of one year and renewable for two additional

years, as opposed to valid for a maximum of two years. Creates a new Option 7 for certification of a person in a field other than education to teach in elementary, middle or secondary programs. (HB 152)

Department of Education

School bus specifications: Requires that school bus standards and specifications be set by the Kentucky Department of Education rather than by the Kentucky Board of Education. (SB 124)

See **LEGISLATIVE** on page 10

KTIP pilot gives two-year intern option

By Faun S. Fishback

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Being a first-year teacher is no walk in the park! "It's hectic just getting used to the school routine and all the paperwork and extra-curricular tasks that go along with teaching," said Michelle Garrett. "I think all first-year teachers need one year to make the transition from student to teacher."

A first-year language arts teacher at Lebanon Middle School in Marion County, Garrett is getting that transitioning year through the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP) pilot project. The KTIP pilot is a two-year internship designed by the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB). The pilot features enhanced mentoring

support during the first year of teaching, which is intended to ease the adjustment for interns.

The beginning teacher completes a modified portfolio and is evaluated during the second year of teaching. At the end of the second year, successful

KTIP pilot participants receive full state certification.

The KTIP pilot is looking for 500 new teachers to participate in the program beginning with the 2004-2005 school year. Currently, 104 first-year teachers are involved in the pilot project.

Your opinion counts!

We want your opinion on how to make *Kentucky Teacher* a more meaningful professional development tool for educators throughout the state. An 11-question survey posted on the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site gives you the opportunity to tell us what you think about this publication.

Just go to www.education.ky.gov and enter "kytsurvey" in the keyword/search box. The survey should take less than five minutes to complete.

The survey asks several questions that will help us learn more about you — our readers. Other questions ask you to tell us what you like in the publication and what you don't find helpful.

Give us your opinion — it counts!

Participants for the 2004-2005 school year will be recruited this spring from graduates at Kentucky higher education institutions, but most beginning teachers who are eligible to participate in regular KTIP are eligible for the KTIP pilot project. Participants must be recommended by their principals or district KTIP coordinators after they are hired.

Since the 1980s, Kentucky's beginning teachers have participated in a one-year internship program. The one-year program provides mentoring to help new teachers strengthen their teaching skills, but also requires the completion of a portfolio and evaluation that same year. Teachers who successfully com-

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Bulletin Board



Conference Connection

Character Education

Pulaski County Schools will host the 2004 Character Education Summit July 26 at the Center for Rural Development in Somerset. The six-hour professional development opportunity will feature authors Philip F. Vincent and Hal Urban.

Contact: Wanda Gaskin, (606) 679-1123; wgaskin.pulaski.net

www.pulaski.net/default.asp?main=/summit2004.asp

The National Character Education Conference will be July 8-10 in St. Louis.

www.csd.org/character/menu.htm

KASA

The Kentucky Association of School Administrators' 35th annual conference is set for July 21-23 at the Galt House Hotel, Louisville. Registration for "Change: Finding Opportunities for Success" can be made online.

www.kasa.org/Conf2004_general.htm

School Social Work

The 37th Midwest School Social Work Conference will be Oct. 7-9 at the Galt House Hotel, Louisville. Student support

personnel are invited to attend sessions on school safety, student support services that assist academic achievement and techniques for working with behavior-disorder students.

www.kassw-ky.org/

Middle School

The Kentucky Middle School Association will hold its annual conference Sept. 19-21 in Owensboro. Featured speakers for "Making a Difference in the Middle" include Rick Wormeli, John Lounsbury and Richard Ramsey.

Contact: Fran Salyers, fran@ure.net
www.kmsaonline.com

Events

Summer DramaWorks

Summer is just around the corner, and that means it's time for Summer DramaWorks at Stage One in Louisville. Students from preschool through high school can explore the many avenues of theater in classes such as StoryPlay, Seuss Caboose, Mystery Theatre, Broadway Bound and Acting Academy.

Brochures are available by calling Stage One, (502) 589-5946.

www.stageone.org

KSTA awards

The Kentucky Science Teachers Association (KSTA) is accepting nominations for its annual recognition program that honors science teachers at the elementary, middle and high school levels who have made a significant contribution in the field of science education. These awards and a Distinguished Service Educator award will be announced during KSTA's fall conference.

Send nominations by May 31 to Jason Harris, (502) 845-8660; jharris@henry.k12.ky.us.

www.ksta.org/

NBPTS workshops

Workshops are scheduled for teachers interested in receiving National Board Certification. These workshops, hosted by the West Kentucky Educational Cooperative, will include an overview of the certification process, the five core propositions, the different types of writing used (description, analysis and reflection), a study of the standards and how to apply.

Workshops will be held May 8, June 5 and Sept. 25 at Miss Scarlett's Restaurant in Grand Rivers.

Contact: Kelly Hamlett, (270) 762-6966; khamlett@wkec.coop.k12.ky.us

www.wkec.org/nbpts.htm

Autism Institute

"Autism Institute: Strategies Series 2004," hosted by the Kentucky Autism Training Center at the University of Louisville, has been scheduled for July 20-21 in Lexington and July 22-23 in Covington. Early childhood educators, special education teachers, speech language pathologists and other professionals who work with children with autism will learn new strategies to promote communication, social skills and cognitive development.

Contact: Kristen Frarey, (502) 852-7277

www.kyautism.com

Genetics workshop

The Department of Plant Pathology at the University of Kentucky's College of Agriculture is holding a teachers' workshop designed to bring cutting-edge science activities into the classroom. Activities and tours will be related to the study of genetics and DNA in modern laboratories. Free classroom materials and resources will be available. Participating teachers will receive a \$75-per-day stipend plus follow-up opportunities. The workshop will be July 19-23 on UK's Lexington campus.

www.science-house.org/fungal/learn/workshop.html

Children's Theatre

Lexington Children's Theatre presents "Sideways Stories from Wayside School," based on the book by Louis Sachar and adapted by John Olive. Performances are offered for school groups May 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13 and 14 at 10 a.m. and 11:45 a.m.; tickets are \$5 per person for school groups.

Contact: Box office, (859) 254-4546
www.lctonstage.org

Old Fort Harrod

Old Fort Harrod State Park is available for school field trips year-round. Costumed interpreters are at the park through Oct. 31. Cost is \$2 per student in groups of 20 or more.

<http://parks.ky.gov/ftharrd2.htm>

Business economics

High school business and social studies teachers can register for a free summer seminar, June 14-15 at the University of Louisville. Learn strategies for interdisciplinary team teaching. Receive eight hours of professional development credit. Limited registration available until April 19.

Contact: Kentucky Department of Education consultants Nancy Graham or Steve Small at (502) 564-3775; ngraham@kde.state.ky.us, ssmall@kde.state.ky.us

Space Day

Space Day 2004 is scheduled for May 6. Educational programs and activities devoted to space, science and mathematics are available online.

www.spaceday.org

Scavenger hunt

In conjunction with the nation's 200th anniversary celebration of the Lewis and Clark expedition, the University of Kentucky's Arboretum will be open to school groups during May. Students can tour the Arboretum, locate plants featured in Lewis and Clark's journals and participate in other scheduled educational activities.

Contact: Kara VanHoose, (859) 257-6955; bduff2@uky.edu

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Commissioner's Comments

2004 legislative session ends with no budget

By Gene Wilhoit
gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us

You may have noticed that the dateline for this issue of *Kentucky Teacher* says April/May 2004. We made the decision last month to combine these issues so that we could bring you the latest, most accurate information about school funding and school laws from the 2004 General Assembly.

Though bills were slow in moving through both legislative chambers, we felt confident last month that this legislative session would not end leaving our schools and districts in financial limbo for the next biennium. We believed we would have budget information to share with you in our last issue for this school year.

We were wrong. In the words of baseball great Yogi Berra, "This is like déjà vu all over again." The 2004 legislative session has ended just like the 2002 session — with no state budget. Again, schools and districts are mandated to make important employment decisions and create their own budgets for next school year — by statute-imposed deadlines — without information about the fiscal support they will receive from the state. In this environment, I have urged superintendents to proceed conservatively in their planning.

I know Kentucky teachers would like information now about pay increases, insurance costs and funding for school programs. Those details aren't available at this writing and won't be until we have a state budget or Gov. Fletcher issues a spending plan.

However, that doesn't mean that we are not working to get answers to your questions about these issues. I want to assure you that the Department of Education staff and I are working with the offices of both the governor and secretary of education to determine what impact the "no budget" situation will have on the department, and our schools and districts.

The governor has committed to include \$3,201 per pupil in his Fiscal Year 2005 spending plan for SEEK. This increase in per-pupil funding is necessary to give 1.5 percent raises to certified personnel other than teachers. The governor also has asked districts to provide raises of 1.5 percent for certified teachers and classified employees using local funds. In addition, he has committed to an increase in the school district teacher retirement funds to cover the fringe benefit cost of those salary increases.

The governor suggested that superintendents use his initial budget, and the technical amendments he filed with the legislature, for their planning purposes.

As soon as the governor lays out a specific plan to deal with the budget situa-

tion, I will contact you with the details. In the meantime, I encourage you to stay focused on the task at hand — leading our schools to proficiency — especially as we approach the end of the school year.

The legislators did confirm four new members of the Kentucky Board of Education. Bonnie Freeman of Louisville, David Rhodes of Mt. Sterling, Janna Vice of Richmond and David Webb of Browns-

sified staff to work additional time to satisfy contract provisions.

Senate Bill 80 requires principals to give students an excused absence of up to 10 days if the principal determines that the request constitutes a significant educational opportunity. Students must make up schoolwork and will be included in the average daily attendance. Excused absences for a significant educational opportunity generally will not be given during state and district testing periods. Students can appeal a denied request for such an excused absence to the superintendent and then to the local school board.

House Bill 176 requires a student's test scores to be counted in the school and district accountability index if the student was or is enrolled in the school or in the district for at least 100 days before the beginning of the state testing window.

House Bill 178 requires a student to be enrolled in the school for 30 days prior to the day he or she drops out to be counted in the school's dropout rate. It also excludes from the dropout rate a student who is enrolled and making satisfactory progress in a district-operated or district-contracted General Educational Development (GED) program or a student who withdraws from school and obtains a GED diploma by Oct. 1 of the following year.

House Bill 551 permits a local board of education to continue paying the employer's contribution for family health insurance when a certified employee is called to active military duty and commits to returning to work in the district when he or she returns. Upon return to work, the district is permitted to make a lump sum payment to the employee's account with the Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System to receive service credit for time on active duty.

On the road again

During the past few weeks, I've visited in six districts and spent time talking with teachers, students and staff in schools. The educators tell me their work is challenging, but they wouldn't have it any other way. Kentucky educators know they have the unique opportunity and the responsibility to make a difference in the lives of Kentucky's children every school day.

We are educators! Our collective goal must be student success. We must work together to expand our thinking and continue to develop effective and efficient strategies for higher learning. Our efforts and our contributions will set the pace for Kentucky's future!

To comment on this topic, send e-mail to the commissioner at gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us.



Photo by Rick McComb

Focusing on health issues

Members of the Robert B. Turner Elementary School (Anderson County) Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP) videotape Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit talking about healthy lifestyles for a pilot project titled "Better Bodies, Better Minds." Becky Crabtree, a graduate of the 2003 Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership, developed the project to address the health concerns of students.

We've faced tough times before! But through it all, educators in Kentucky have taken comfort in and gathered strength from the rewards of teaching children.

Our greatest rewards come from watching eyes light up with understanding. It's the lump in your throat when you watch every member of your first class accept a diploma at high school graduation. It's having former students thank you for helping prepare them for life after high school.

Whether we have a budget or not, students will arrive at school in August ready to learn, and Kentucky teachers will remain committed to their students and our education system and make public education work in Kentucky!

New legislation

The state budget and tax modernization discussions consumed most of the 2004 legislative session. That is reflected in the smaller number of bills introduced and the fewer pieces of legislation passed into law. The number of enacted bills concerning education is down nearly half of what have been passed in previous years.

ville will participate in their first board meeting in June. You can read more about these members on Page 19.

You'll want to review the legislative summary that begins on Page 1 of this issue to see details of all the enacted education bills. However, here are a few I want to highlight.

The legislature has directed the Office of Education Accountability to study the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) and prepare a written report by Sept. 15. That report will be submitted to the Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee before it is given to the Legislative Research Commission and the legislature's Interim Joint Committee on Education for further study and possible action.

Senate Bill 28 establishes new conditions for awarding service credit to certified and classified employees when a school district misses instructional days due to an emergency. The bill allows local districts to decide how to make up the missed days — by adding days to the school calendar or by lengthening the instructional day. It also provides for clas-

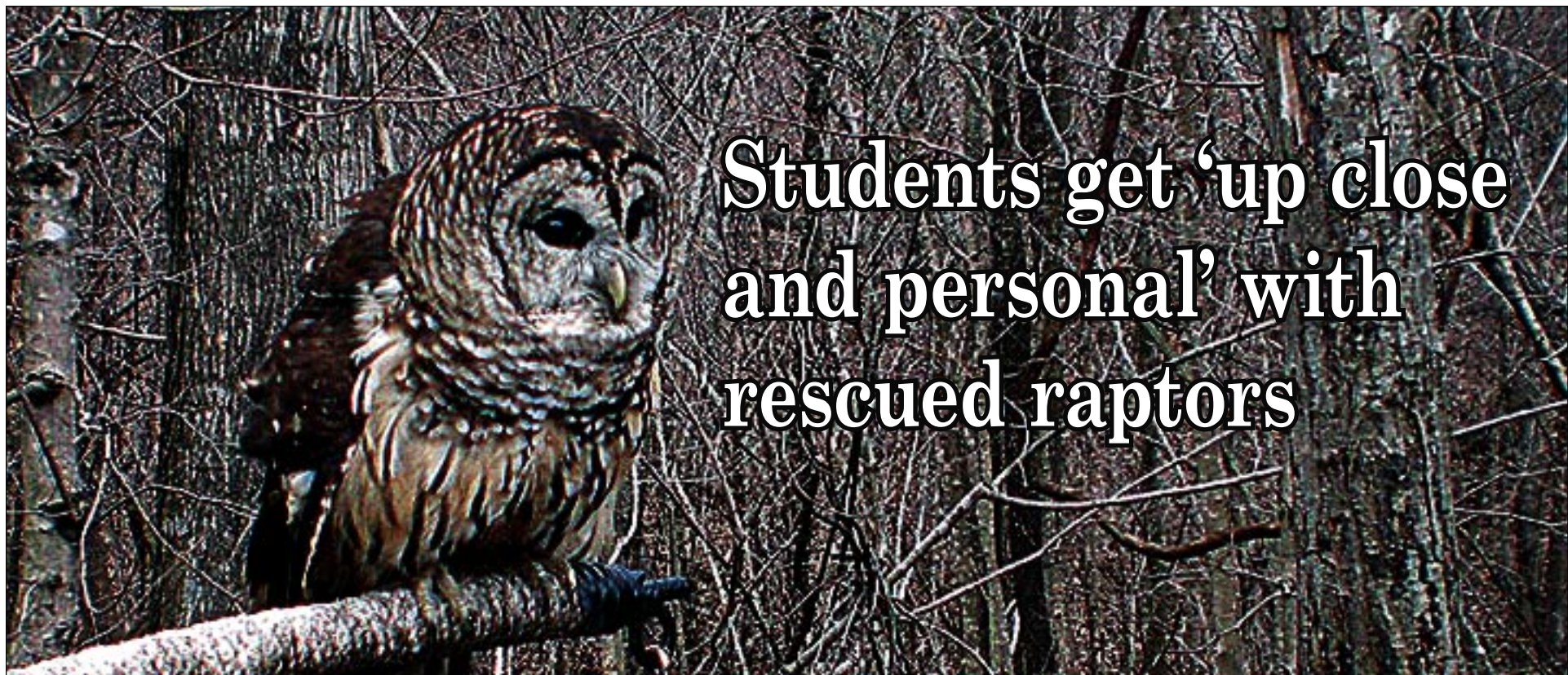


Photo by Rick McComb

Students get 'up close and personal' with rescued raptors

Izzy, a barn owl, watches over the woods while students clean her cage at Southwestern Pulaski County High School.

By Joy Barr

jbarr@kde.state.ky.us

At Southwestern Pulaski County High School, students stand “nose to beak” with bald eagles, falcons, hawks and owls nearly every day. As participants in a nationally recognized environmental program, these students are learning about birds of prey, or raptors, from a bird’s-eye view.

Students at this southcentral Kentucky school receive real-life environmental, kinesthetic learning opportunities when they take raptor biology. The high school in Somerset has an onsite environmental center where students care for threatened or endangered birds of prey. The center is completely student built and supported.

Many of the birds at the center were injured in the wild and were brought to the rehabilitation center for medical care. The center’s goal is to return the healed birds to their natural habitat.

Occasionally, a bird cannot be released. These birds sometimes become “education birds,” which students work with closely and use in school and community programs to educate others.

Frances Carter began the Raptor Program in 1986 while teaching biology in Casey County. A game warden called Carter after finding an injured owl. He brought the bird to the school, and Carter’s biology class adopted “Hooter,” cared for it and eventually released the bird.

The experience led Carter to begin a raptor rehabilitation program at the school. When Carter moved to Southwestern in 1993 to teach biology, she brought the program with her.

James Cox also teaches biology at Southwestern and assists the students with the raptor program. “This is a very hands-on program and is closely aligned with our core content,” said Cox.

The teachers said all areas of the curriculum can be covered with the environmental raptor program, including social

skills and responsibility. The curricular aspect is strong — biology, chemistry, business and communications. Having students decide the schedule and routine for caring for the injured raptors helps build social skills and responsibility.

Students may take raptor biology, an advanced science class that involves students in a thorough study of birds of prey. Students learn about the classifications of different birds, including the hawk, falcon and owl families, and how to feed and care for the raptors. The students maintain the raptor cages weekly.

Principal Boyd Randolph has watched this program develop into a nationally recognized raptor rehabilitation program. Students get the opportunity to participate in a highly organized program. “This experience builds the whole child,” he said.

“The community link is irreplaceable,” said Randolph. Parents and other community volunteers transport the birds, help with the center’s maintenance and help with fundraising.

Randolph noted that the Pulaski County community expects Southwestern students to be at the forefront in environmental science-related issues. The raptor program has gained the most notoriety, but Southwestern also offers marine biology and environmental science programs. “Through these programs, students get a chance for experiences they might otherwise never get,” said Randolph.

Beginning in the 7th grade, students may belong to the school’s Conservation and Raptor Club. Activities in the club, in addition to caring for the raptors, include recycling, a nature trail, greenhouse, native flowers and a summer environmental camp. Club members prepare a newsletter and have their own Web site. The club also supports “envirothon” teams, groups of students who study the environment, Carter said.

Students who work directly with the

“educational” raptors develop a close emotional bond with them. As they are training, the students will read to them using a soft, soothing voice to keep the birds calm.

Mitchell Nutt, a senior, is active in the raptor club and often is a part of the traveling student group. “It is interesting to learn about the different birds. You cannot just walk up to one,” he says.

Each student works with a specific bird. The bird begins to trust the student and will respond to the familiar voice. Then the student is ready to take the bird out for school and community demonstrations.

About eight birds travel with the students as ambassadors educating children and adults. The students learn to speak in front of school and community groups as they share their knowledge about raptors. It is very much a get-and-give process. The students learn about the birds and then share their knowledge with others. People who see the demonstrations get a better understanding and deeper appreciation for birds of prey.

The center has two bald eagles, Liberty and Indy, that were permanently injured before arriving at the center. Now they are favorites of the students. But the students also are very enthusiastic about the

red-tailed hawk, Jerrico, and owls, Saucy, Cleo and Typo.

Olivia Gifford, a junior, is a member of the club and often travels with the birds. Gifford wants to be a veterinarian. “This has been a good experience for me, and I really enjoy working with the raptors,” said Gifford.

For more information about Southwestern’s conservation and raptor program, contact Frances Carter or James Cox at (606) 678-9000, (606) 678-6980 (direct raptor line); fcarter@pulaski.net or jcox@pulaski.net.



Photo by Rick McComb

Laura Wright, a junior at Southwestern Pulaski County High, works with Typo, a great horned owl that was caught in a barbed-wire fence and had to have a wing amputated. Typo is one of the eight rehabilitated birds students use in presentations about the school’s raptor program.

Kentucky schools chosen for transition, leadership project

Schools in two Kentucky districts are among only 10 middle/high school combinations that the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) has selected for an elite project. Graves County Middle and High schools and the middle and high school grades at Jackson (Independent) City School will participate in the SREB High Schools That Work and Making Middle Grades Work Transition Initiative.

The project, which will look at student transition points and educator leadership skills, follows "Making Schools Work," a collaborative effort in which both schools participated.

"We selected schools from our last project that had begun intensive efforts to focus on transition and were moving on the path to continued improvement," said Renee Murray, a SREB school improvement consultant. "Making Schools Work was the first project of its kind in the country to focus on improvement in grades 6 through 12 as a whole, examining what students are taught and how."

"This new project is an extension of that," she continued. "We will work first on the transition from middle to high school, especially Freshman Academy at Graves County High School, because it's a concerted effort in that area."

The study also will look at transition from high school to postsecondary education. Both high schools were early

recipients of Kentucky Department of Education grants to improve Advanced Placement course opportunities and are increasing the number of students taking more rigorous courses.

The Jackson district has raised graduation requirements so that all students must have four mathematics and four science credits to graduate. The district also has a strong dual credit program with the Lees College campus of Hazard Community and Technical College. A high percentage of Jackson students leave high school with some college credit.

The third component of the project will look at leadership skills. "That works well with Graves County's Leadership Team, which is the result of another grant and local efforts," Murray noted. She envisions the district leadership team of about 30 teachers and administrators becoming self-sufficient in its own efforts toward continuous quality improvement.

Although Jackson is a much smaller district, it has a strong commitment to developing school and teacher leaders for roles in curriculum and instruction.

SREB was created in 1948 to help leaders in southern states advance education and improve socioeconomic conditions. Kentucky is one of 16 SREB member states.

SREB receives funding from a number of national philanthropic organizations and government grants. A federal grant

from the Office of Educational Improvement funds this new three-year project. Participating school districts then pay for teachers to attend training sessions, according to Graves County secondary instructional supervisor Tommy Scott.

"They've shown us where our weaknesses are and how to fix them," said Stephanie West, a middle school mathematics teacher, about the Making Schools Work initiative. "They suggested we vary our teaching strategies and gave us concrete examples of how to use them."

"SREB's professional development is some of the best I've seen," said Ward Bushart, principal at Graves County High. "If they suggest a teaching strategy, it works. For one thing, we're working to become more student-centered in

the classroom. I see great things coming from this association."

Superintendent Taylor Collins said teachers at the Jackson schools have participated in professional development through the SREB programs that has changed the culture of professionalism and leadership in the school. "We're changing history. We are accountable for all of our students, and we can be successful — if not all the time — at least 99.9 percent of the time," he said.

To learn more about these schools' collaboration with SREB, contact Graves County's Tommy Scott, tscott@graves.k12.ky.us; (270) 674-1545; or Jackson Independent Superintendent Taylor Collins, tcollins@jackson-ind.k12.ky.us, (606) 666-4979.

New ECU education study looks at teacher characteristics

Have you stopped recently to ponder where you might be today if it weren't for an exceptional teacher or two who invested their time and efforts in your education? Was it destiny or a twist of fate that placed you in their charge?

Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) is looking for stories about exceptional educators who played a major role in shaping your life for a large-scale study under way at the College of Education. As the college makes plans to celebrate 100 years of preparing educators as part of EKU's Centennial Celebration in 2006, the staff is embarking on a project to compile stories of great teachers and the qualities that made them memorable.

You can help by submitting your memories of that special teacher who had an unforgettable influence on your life and with whom you must share credit for what you have become. The goal is to collect

more than 5,000 accounts of great teachers and glean out the characteristics that made them so successful. EKU's education faculty will study the information for implications for preparing the next generation of educators. The findings also will be published.

Each entry should include the teacher's name, the school where they taught, the first characteristic that comes to mind when you think of that person and a specific memory about him or her. Also include a description of the way your favorite teacher treated you as a student.

Submit memories about your favorite teacher online at the Great Teachers, Great Memories Web site (www.education.eku.edu/favoriteteacher/) or mail information to College of Education, Eastern Kentucky University, 521 Lancaster Ave., Richmond, KY 40475, Attention: Great Teachers, Great Memories.

Three schools selected as Kentucky Schools to Watch

Logan County's Adairville Elementary and Auburn Elementary and Fort Campbell's Mahaffey Middle have been named Schools to Watch in the commonwealth by the Kentucky Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform. The schools were recognized during ceremonies in mid-April.

The Kentucky Schools to Watch program is modeled after and affiliated with the National Schools to Watch program, sponsored by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform. The national organization has identified criteria to describe high-performing schools that serve students in the middle grades.

Such schools are academically excellent, responsive to the developmental challenges of young adolescents and socially equitable. These schools have high expectations for all students.

"We have good research data to show that schools that are consistent with the National Forum's vision are schools where children are successful," said Sara Delano Moore, co-director of the Center for Middle School Academic Achievement (CMSAA) at Eastern Kentucky University. "We're eager to share with other schools around Kentucky — and around the nation — the work of these three schools that any middle

school, regardless of size or status, can adopt if they make that commitment. Mahaffey puts a priority on giving its counselor time to counsel. Adairville uses looping of students at the middle grades level, and Auburn is infusing the arts in its curriculum and using rubrics."

Launched in 1999, the National Schools to Watch program identified four schools across the country that were meeting or exceeding a set of strict criteria for excellence. Barren County Middle in Kentucky was one of those four schools. In 2003, Kentucky, Virginia, Illinois and Colorado were selected by the National Forum to participate in statewide programs, joining existing programs in California, North Carolina and Georgia.

The Kentucky Schools to Watch program is a collaborative effort of the Kentucky Department of Education, the Kentucky Middle School Association, the Collaborative for Teaching and Learning, the Kentucky Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform and the CMSAA.

For more information about the Kentucky Schools to Watch program and how schools can apply, go to the CMSAA Web site at www.middleschoolhouse.eku.edu and click on Schools to Watch.



Nothing but net (profits)

Jeremy Smith takes aim at the basket during the annual Entrepreneur Fair at Stonewall Elementary in Fayette County. After studying economic principles in 4th grade, 5th-graders put what they've learned into practice at this event as sole proprietors or partners in businesses like Hoot's Hoops. Eighty-nine percent of the 90 businesses operating this year reported profits, with the top five businesses earning between \$100 and \$159.

Photo by Rick McComb

Read & Discuss

‘Science Notebooks: Writing About Inquiry’

Reviewed by Jackie Hensley
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Across Kentucky, science students often use instruments and research techniques that real scientists use in their daily work. One such tool that teachers may not have considered as being among a scientist's tools is a notebook. Yes, a notebook.

We use them everyday in our classwork. But we don't realize that notebooks are essential for scientists to document their work. They provide a record of procedures, observations and results that occur during each step of a scientist's work.

Science notebooks also can be essential tools for student scientists. Students can use notebooks to build a foundation of understanding in inquiry-based science. They provide students with an opportunity to write for information that can be used and presented, just as real-life scientists do on a daily basis. How can teachers develop strategies to teach students how to record their inquiry-based scientific activities?

I highly recommend one book, “Science Notebooks: Writing About Inquiry.” The book by Brian Campbell and Lori Fulton focuses on the need of students to use science notebooks as tools in writing about



Photo by Rick McComb

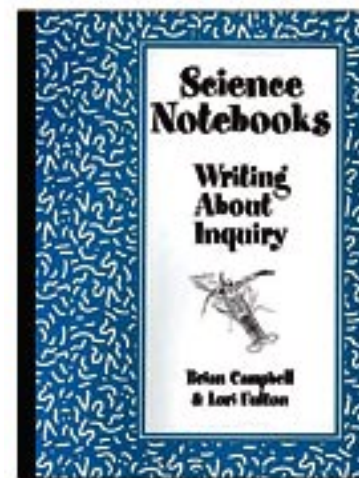
Mackey Gaskin and Chris Muse gather samples to test the pH level of creek water for their biology class at Southwestern Pulaski County High School. Science notebooks can be essential tools for student scientists to write about such inquiry activities.

inquiry activities.

Science notebooks give students a place to record their investigations and support their ideas with evidence. Their records may include notes and lists, technical drawings with labels, charts, tables, graphs, written observations, ways to present their results to other

people and next steps in their activities.

This book illustrates how students can benefit from writing about science and writing for information. The authors provide examples of how writing in science notebooks can help students develop their thinking and understanding of the content.



**By Brian Campbell
and Lori Fulton**
Paperback; 112 pages;
Heinemann, 2003;
ISBN: 0325005680

Students also learn to process their thinking through writing.

Science notebooks give students the opportunity and a method to organize their thoughts to better understand what they have learned. Students also can learn to share their inquiry activity results with other students through what they've written in their science notebooks.

One of the best features of this book is that it provides good examples of student work — both the writing and drawings — that teachers can expect from students in various grade levels. Each chapter provides strate-

gies that teachers can consider to prompt writing in the notebooks. These strategies also help students improve their communications skills, not only about relating scientific information but information in general.

This book is a good resource for teachers who want help in moving their instruction to more inquiry-based activities. It is also a resource for teachers who have a student-centered, inquiry-based science classroom but have their students recording information in other ways.

(Jackie Hensley is a science consultant for the Kentucky Department of Education.)

‘Mosaic of Thought’

Reviewed by Linda Satterlee-McFadin
Jefferson County Schools

Visiting other teachers — teachers deemed exemplary in their fields — has been one of the most educational experiences of my teaching career. I was able to dissect how they taught, how they managed their students, how they managed their craft of teaching reading and writing, how they arranged their classrooms and what was important enough to live on their walls.

The three teachers I observed made a big impact on my teaching and my classroom. This is the kind of educational experience teachers need, but how often can we do that — leave our classrooms for a day or two to observe experts in their natural habitats?

By reading “Mosaic of Thought,” you will be accomplishing the next best thing. You will be there with the authors as they observe teachers, students and classrooms. You'll join them as they conference with teachers about their experiences.

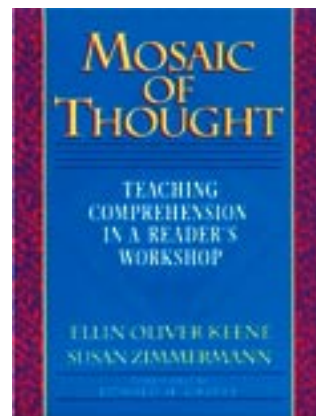
The authors are executive director and staff development initiative director for the Denver-based Public Education and Business Coalition. In those capacities, they observed and conferred with many teachers. Most importantly, they are people who continue to analyze their own thought processes and those of other proficient readers to understand how people come to be thoughtful, independent readers.

The book's format is reader friendly and interesting. The

book contains poetry, scenarios and rich language, and all but one of the 10 chapters begins with literature or analogies. Chapter Two begins with the authors' sensory-detailed description of finding Ms. Miller's kindergarten classroom. It will pique your interest and delight your teacher-soul.

Read this book if you're not able to visit other classes. Read it for personal edification. Or read it for a mental vacation. It will enhance your educational life.

(Linda Satterlee-McFadin is a language arts/arts and humanities teacher at Western Middle School in Jefferson County. She read this book to finish a Rank I Louisville Writing Project, Gamma Cohort class at the University of Louisville.)



**By Ellin Oliver Keene
and Susan Zimmermann**
Paperback; 255 pages;
Heinemann, 1997;
ISBN: 0435072374

Have something to read and discuss with peers?

To recommend a book, article, software or Web site to other educators, send your review by e-mail to kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us or by postal mail to *Kentucky Teacher*, 1914 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601.

Teachers learn how to break language barriers

By Cathy Lindsey

clindsey@kde.state.ky.us

Imagine leaving your home and entering an environment where no one speaks your language. To succeed in your new situation, you must learn to speak their language and re-learn the basics of your education in this new language. You also must continue to learn new material at the same pace as those who already speak the language you are learning.

How difficult would that be for you as an adult? Now imagine being a child in this situation.

According to the 2000 U.S. census, this is the predicament for more than 10,000 school age children in our state. Kentucky schools now serve more than 8,500 students whose primary language is not English and who have been formally identified as limited English proficient (LEP).

This state LEP enrollment represents a 24 percent increase from the 2001-2002 school year, and a 316 percent increase over the past 10 years. This is one of the highest growth rates in the nation. With reportedly 96 languages spoken in Kentucky public schools, the expansion of language diversity is now a reality for educators throughout the state.

"With such growth in our LEP population, providing effective teaching strategies for these students has never been more important," said Rina Gratz, LEP consultant for the Kentucky Department of Education. "Unfortunately, there is currently no state money and limited federal money dedicated to LEP."

During the 2003-2004 school year, three LEP Teacher Academies were held to help teachers learn more about educating students with limited English proficiency. The Kentucky Department of Education, the Region IV Comprehensive Center and ESCORT, a national resource center dedicated to improving the educational opportunities for migrant children, sponsored the academies.

Funded by a Title III grant through the state's educational

co-operatives and migrant programs, the academies offered long-term professional development opportunities for district teams of administrators, English as a Second Language (ESL) and regular classroom teachers. The three-person district teams met five days throughout the school year. Academy sessions provided information on program models

to be invaluable.

"My ESL students have overcome incredible obstacles," Whatley said. "Education is so important to them. Their success depends on it. They welcome help, direction and need a lot of support with acquiring academic language, developing study skills, organization, and mental and emotional stamina."

mainstream and ESL teachers to become better equipped to assist their ELLs.

"For some teams, this is a catalyst, providing them with information and resources to get them started," Thacker explained. "One team chose to write their district ELL plan as their project and are taking steps to implement it. Other dis-

mation because these strategies help promote best practices and increase literacy for all students," Whatley said. "Teachers in every classroom are faced with meeting diverse learners. These strategies help all of our students acquire academic language, which is the language necessary to be successful in school."

Whatley's students are from all over the world. Students from Guatemala, Kosovo, Mexico, Cuba and Vietnam focus on bridging academic and social language. While they are familiar with English as a social language, Whatley also holds them accountable for academic vocabulary as well.

"A wonderful and simple strategy I have learned is to develop language objectives that support content objectives. The key is to develop all four domains of language: listening, speaking, reading and writing," Whatley explained. "Cooperative learning, word walls and technology are the most helpful strategies with my LEP students. I use tape recorders, computers, lots of visuals, lots of graphic organizers and vocabulary-building exercises tied to our word



Chistiana Barrera and Lan Oieng, students in Norka Whatley's class, join in a discussion about cultural differences and similarities. Whatley uses a variety of strategies to help her students acquire the language skills needed to be successful in school.

and instructional strategies for meeting the educational needs of LEP students.

Teams were introduced to the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) guidelines for designing, implementing and evaluating programs for English language learners (ELLs), the basics of second language acquisition and the impact of native language proficiency on student achievement.

"Many strategies were presented and discussed during the five-day academies," explained Jena Thacker, Northern Kentucky Cooperative Education Services ESL consultant. "Some strategies included making textbooks, assignments and teacher language comprehensible for ELLs, such as enunciating and providing 'natural redundancy' while presenting or explaining the material or concept more than once and in more than one way."

Norka Whatley, ESL teacher at Iroquois Middle School in Jefferson County, considers her experience at the LEP academy

The main focus of the academies is to help teachers improve students' access to core content while developing better strategies to acquire language. The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) method was introduced as a means to deliver instruction effectively to ESL students through the curriculum. This content-based language instruction teaches language through the context of content.

"Learning about the SIOP model of instruction has been an important piece along with distinguishing between developing social language versus academic language," Whatley said.

At the academies, teams had their choice of projects. They could do one of the following:

- produce a unit or lesson plan that incorporates research-based teaching modifications
- compose or evaluate a program plan using the OCR information as a guide
- devise a professional development plan for a school or district that focuses on helping

teachers are taking the information presented and are developing PD plans. Still others are building upon their existing ELL programs and training teachers and educating parents about their rights and privileges in the public school system."

Whatever the stage, many teams say they came away with new strategies and a notion of group understanding that the team teachers, both ESL and regular classroom teachers, are on the same page.

"In Jefferson County, our goal is to spread the wealth of infor-

walls. The most helpful strategy is good classroom management where kids feel safe, have clear rules and consequences and are engaged in more student-centered activities.

"As teachers, the best gift we can give students is a more promising future," Whatley said. "I believe developing the language for success in school is the key."

Contact: Norka Whatley at nwhatle1@jefferson.k12.ky.us or (502) 485-8270, or Jena Thacker at jthacker@nkces.coop.k12.ky.us or (859) 442-3510.

More resources for teachers

Professional development opportunities for teachers of English language learners are becoming more readily available. The Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional ESL Conference will take place May 22. Go to www.hccanet.org for more information.

Kentucky Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (KYTESOL) will hold its annual fall conference Oct. 22-23 in Lexington. Go to www.kytesol.org for more information.

LEP Teacher Academies for the 2004-2005 school year are now being planned. Look for more information soon on the Kentucky Department of Education Web site (www.education.ky.gov) or contact Rina Gratz at rgratz@kde.state.ky.us or (502) 564-2106.

10 simple rules of discipline

Strategies for keeping the classroom focus on learning throughout the school year

By Mark Wasicsko

Eastern Kentucky University

I made a bet with a high school teacher during a spring graduate course on classroom discipline. Her seniors had typical end-of-the-year behavior problems brought on by what she described as a “convergence of spring fever, senioritis and hormones.”

I wagered that I could teach her seniors to be more “self-disciplined” in two, one-hour class sessions. If I did, she would provide an end-of-term pizza party for our class.

The only conditions were that I teach the class alone and that she report to our class any behavior changes in her students. She agreed.

When I met with her students, we discussed why people do what they do and how, by using reinforcements, we could change behaviors in both their teachers and parents.

The students’ definition of reinforcements they could use on teachers went from apples and candy to a much more sophisticated understanding. They decided saying thank you, laughing at a teacher’s corny joke or expressing appreciation for something taught in class would be good reinforcements.

Later, the teacher reported to my graduate class that her students were indeed acting better. They were more responsive and polite. Some even told her they were learning more.

Now, my students were ready to discuss how they could improve and sustain good student behaviors!

The 10 simple rules

After years of working with teachers and students, I have found that many teachers inadvertently use self-defeating discipline strategies. These 10 simple rules — even if applied late in the year — can substantially decrease discipline problems.

1. Expect the best

Teachers can encourage good behavior by the expectations they set. By conveying negative attitudes toward students, many teachers create their own discipline problems. I use this simple technique: Find at least one likable characteristic about each student and focus on it whenever interacting with them. If students feel liked and accepted, they respond with respect and deference.

2. Express yourself

Sadly, most students must learn the meaning of “behave” by the process of elimination — “Don’t look out the window... Don’t put feet on the desk... don’t... don’t...” Research and experience show that students try to follow rules and directives when teachers are clear, positive and explicit with their expectations.

3. Rewards, yes!

The overuse of punishment can increase discipline problems. However,

research indicates that punishments still outweigh rewards by 10 to one in the typical classroom.

Rewards bring attention to *good* behaviors: “Thank you for being prepared, Billy.” This provides an appropriate model for other students and makes students feel positive about themselves, about their teacher and about school.

Reinforcing positive behaviors *reduces* the inclination toward misbehavior and *enhances* the flow of your lesson. You stay on task, get more student participation and accentuate the correct responses.

4. Fit the crime

Many teachers inadvertently escalate discipline problems by using shortsighted or ineffective punishments. The classic example is punishing the whole class when a few students misbehave.

Punishments are more effective when they are the natural consequences of the behavior. For example, if a student writes on the bathroom wall, punish him with clean-up responsibilities and any related expenses.

If you cannot devise natural consequences, ask the offenders what they consider an appropriate punishment. They may come up with a punishment that at least *appears to them* to be appropriate.

5. Remove privileges

Privileges and responsibilities go hand in hand. For example, students who finish their work neatly and on time get privileges like playing educational games or earning points toward free time. Students who break the rules lose those privileges.

6. Ignore minor misbehavior

Don’t draw attention to each minor infraction of the rules. Instead ignore it and, at a later time, talk to the student privately. Why draw attention to each minor problem when you can stay focused on teaching?

7. Mean what you say

Be consistent with rules, assignments and punishments. Don’t give warnings, second chances or deadline extensions.

To avoid the pitfalls of inconsistency, pose consequences you can and will deliver. Mean what you say and, when you say it, follow through every time.

8. Know each student

Sometimes, teachers inadvertently punish students they intend to reward and visa versa. For example, I was a non-reader in 4th grade and got sick at the thought of reading aloud. One day after helping the teacher, she “rewarded” me by letting me read first. I made sure I was never “helpful” enough to be so severely punished again!

The opposite happens just as often. Many class clowns delight in such “punishments” as standing in the corner, leaving the room or being called to the teacher’s desk. The key is to know your students well, and know what is rewarding and what is punishing for each.

9. Reward with instruction

Reduce discipline problems and increase learning by using your content area as a reward. This can make lessons meaningful, practical and fun. Bring pies or cookies to class to demonstrate fractions and use them as rewards. See how fast students learn the difference between 1/2 and 1/8! The results will be less misbehavior and a greater appreciation for both teacher and subject.

10. Handle with kindness

Treat students with kindness. If students are treated in a cold or impersonal manner, they are less likely to care if they cause you grief. If they are treated with warmth and respect, they will want to treat you well in return.

Final thoughts

Teachers can reduce discipline problems, but these problems cannot — and perhaps should not — be totally eliminated. When children are enthusiastic

about learning, involved in what they are doing and allowed to express themselves creatively, “discipline problems” will occur.

For dictators and tyrants, robot-like obedience is a major objective. For teachers, however, the more critical goal is helping students reach their potential as individuals.

Just as we teach the way we were taught, we tend to discipline with some of the same ineffectual methods that were used on us. These simple suggestions can help teachers get through to the end of the year and make school more “rewarding” for all involved.

(Mark Wasicsko is the dean of the College of Education at Eastern Kentucky University. He has spent 25 years studying the dispositions of effective educators with particular emphasis on teacher selection and teacher preparation. Contact: mark.wasicsko@eku.edu, (859) 622-3515)



Photo by Rick McComb

Pointing to role models

Kasey Jacobs, an upper primary student at North Pointe Elementary in Boone County, shows classmates the photograph of a high school student who mentors in their school. Principal David Thompson has developed a character behavior program called “Trading Cards” where elementary students earn and collect photo cards of high school students who serve as role models for this school.

KTIP from Page 1

plete KTIP receive certification at the end of one year.

Karen Cobb, Garrett's mentor at Lebanon Middle, has mentored teachers under both KTIP and the KTIP pilot. The pilot program "gives us more opportunity to observe each other and work on plans for improvement," Cobb explained. She said she is spending about the same amount of time mentoring Garrett as she does interns in the traditional KTIP, which lasts only one year.

"She's given me priceless advice to make my teaching more effective for the students," said Garrett. "Just having Karen Cobb as a mentor to collaborate with has helped me a great deal professionally by making me take a critical look at what I am teaching, as well as how I am teaching it."

"Kentucky's internship program is already strong," said Dee Jones, KTIP pilot project coordinator. "The pilot project gives us an opportunity to experiment with the way we support interns so

as to improve the program. It also allows us to study the variables that influence KTIP and to do a formative evaluation of our efforts." The results of the pilot will be reported to the EPSB and to the General Assembly's Education Subcommittee.

In addition to the mentoring year, the KTIP pilot offers clear, concise rubrics to help new teachers develop effective instructional practices to improve student learning. The portfolio requirement has been modified to include a teacher work sample, which guides the intern through a thorough analysis of student work and includes rubrics developed to assist mentors and principals in a more precise evaluation of the new teachers.

According to Jones, new materials, free online professional development and stipends make the program very attractive to both new teachers and mentors. "We are committed to improving the experience for both the intern and the mentor, which will, in turn, improve stu-

dent learning and school leadership capacity."

Cobb agrees that mentoring new teachers has great benefit for veteran teachers as well. "Whenever I fill out an observation document or go over it with an intern, it makes me review all the things that need to be done in the classroom. Sometimes those reminders help me get in line when I need it," she said. "I am very excited about the KTIP pilot document for analyzing student work to improve instruction. I've looked for ways to do this, but this document gives me a vehicle to accomplish that goal."

To learn more about the KTIP pilot, go to www.kyepsb.net and click on "KTIP Pilot Program" or contact Dee Jones at DeniseB.Jones@ky.gov, (502) 564-4606, Ext. 267.



Photo by Rick McComb

Karen Cobb, a teacher for 11 years, talks between classes at Lebanon Middle School with first-year teacher Michelle Garrett. Cobb mentors Garrett in the KTIP pilot project to help her develop strong instructional practices to improve student achievement.

BULLETIN BOARD from Page 2

Events

Literacy Institute

Janet Allen and a team of teacher-facilitators will conduct a four-day Literacy Institute July 19-22 at Henderson County High School for secondary educators across content areas.

Participants will learn about best practice literacy and learning research as well as literacy strategies to use in all content areas. They will be involved in

hands-on training during seven workshop sessions and have opportunities for professional sharing during scheduled dialogue groups. Resource materials are included in the registration fee of \$495.

For more information or a registration form, contact the Badgett Regional Cooperative, the event sponsor, at (270) 821-4909.

Electronic information

The U.S. Department of Education offers electronic information updates designed specifically for classroom teachers. To receive the updates, send your e-mail address to teachers@ed.gov.

Teacher grants

The National Geographic Society's Education Foundation offers grants to K-

12 educators to facilitate their work with geography and cultural stewardship in the classroom, school, district and community. Applications accepted until June 10.

www.nationalgeographic.com/education/teacher_community/get_grant.html

Bulletin Board is compiled by Joy Barr
jbarr@kde.state.ky.us

STATE from Page 1

board has decided it is time to consider improvements to ensure that Kentucky's remains one of the nation's top education systems.

The board authorized department staff to investigate possible improvements to the system in the areas of assessment support for students and teachers, student accountability, use of technology, use of student data and teacher involvement in scoring. Implementation plans will be brought to the board for improvements that prove to be reasonable.

As part of the discussion, the board indicated that the central goal of the state assessment and accountability system remains that of providing a valid and reliable public accountability gauge to measure the status of every school in meeting the goals set by the legislature as implemented by the board. Additionally, the board agreed that the system could be strengthened with a more direct link between assessment, curriculum and instruction.

The board also heard a number of presentations and had lengthy discussions on components of CATS, including the

following:

- relating accountability to A1 schools and A2-A6 programs
- establishing reward strategies for 2004-2006
- considering longitudinal assessment and implications for accountability
- providing greater online assistance to teachers

During a meeting of the board's committees on assessment and accountability and on curriculum, members discussed possible modifications to the writing portfolio assessment process for CATS. Major areas of discussion included instructional time spent on portfolios, portfolio connections to P-16 transition and resolving differences in teacher-produced scores and audited scores.

The board approved bringing together a committee of stakeholders to study and bring recommendations to the board on the feasibility of changes to the writing portfolio in the following areas:

- percent of weight within the academic index
- quality of training and audiences

reached by training on writing portfolio implementation

- necessity to revisit the writing performance standards
- consideration of using a unified scoring process
- using Kentucky teachers to serve as audit-scorers
- exploring use of alternate sets of content at various grade levels
- spreading portfolio entries across grade levels or changing grade levels where portfolio assessment occurs
- improving the code of ethics
- decreasing the importance of the writing portfolio score and increasing emphasis on improvement of writing
- appropriate use of technology in the writing process.

The two board committees will receive an update at the August meeting on the work of this new stakeholder committee.

Other decisions

The board also gave final approval to a proposed regulation governing pupil attendance. The proposed regulation updates guidance to school districts, makes the regulation more user-friendly and conforms state law to updated federal guidelines. A public hearing will be held

on the regulation in Frankfort on May 24. After the hearing, a legislative committee reviews the regulation before it becomes final.

Each spring, the board establishes the per-child rates for the Kentucky Preschool Program for the next school year. Rates approved by the board for 2004-2005 are subject to the final state budget appropriation for preschool. Rates range from \$1,982 for educating an at-risk child to \$3,765 for a child with severe/multiple disabilities. The per-child rates are down from previous years due to insufficient state funding for the increasing number of students identified for preschool education.

The next meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education will be June 2 and 3 in Frankfort. More information about the board is available at www.education.ky.gov. Enter "Kentucky Board of Education" in the keyword/search box and click.

(Information for this story was compiled by Lisa Y. Gross, lgross@kde.state.ky.us, and Cathy Lindsey, clindsey@kde.state.ky.us.)

LEGISLATIVE from Page 1

Transferring authority of school councils: Establishes procedures for scholastic audit teams to recommend to the commissioner of education the transfer to the superintendent or a highly skilled educator of the authority of the school council at a school that failed to meet its goal for two or more successive accountability cycles. (SB111)

Local boards and districts

Emergency days for staff: Establishes how certified school employees fulfill the minimum 185-day contract with a school district and receive service credit in a school district that misses school days due to an emergency, including weather-related. Provides conditions for classified school employees to work additional time to be applied toward the employee's contract and calculation of service credit in a district that misses school days due to an emergency, including weather-related. Applies to the 2003-2004 school year. (SB 28)

Students in court: Clarifies the notification procedure when a petition against a child has been filed in court (24 hours) or a child has been adjudicated guilty of certain offenses. If petition is dismissed, all records of the incident or notification created in the school or district are to be destroyed and no longer included in the child's school records. (SB 52)

Diplomas for veterans: Requires local boards of education to award high school diplomas to certain honorably discharged veterans of the Korean War. (HB 113)

Physical education requirement: Requires the Kentucky Board of Education and local boards of education to accept the Reserve Officers Training Corps program course as meeting the physical education requirement for high school graduation. (HB 113)

School board elections: Establishes procedures for the chief state school officer to fill county school board member openings and independent school board openings for the term of office if no candidate or an insufficient number of candidates files for office. (HB 398)

Employee references: Provides limited immunity to an employer who discloses job performance information about a former or current employee to a prospective employer, if requested to do so, unless the employer discloses information knowing that it is false, with reckless disregard of whether it is true or false, or with intent to mislead the prospective employer; or disclosure of the information by the employer constitutes an unlawful discriminatory practice. (HB 48)

Schools

Excused absences from school: Requires a school principal to give a student an excused absence of up to 10 days if the principal determines it is to pursue an educational enhancement opportunity of significant educational value, except during state and district testing windows. Provides for an appeal to the superintendent and then to the local board of educa-

tion. (SB 80)

School councils: Requires a school council identified as in need of improvement and the school district to include in their improvement and assistance plans, respectively, actions to improve the functioning of the school council and the decision making process at the school. (SB 111)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) hearings: Requires that a request for an administrative hearing alleging a violation of the federal IDEA be made within three years after the cause of action arises. (SB 115)

Children with disabilities: Makes the requirement for signed statements from two medical professionals for a student who is excused from school attendance for more than six months not apply to a student whose doctor or other medical professional certifies that the student has a chronic physical condition that renders attendance inadvisable and the condition is not likely to improve within one year, but requires the admissions and release committee to consider annually the child's condition and existing documentation and request updated evidence if needed or at least every three years. (HB 10)

Health services: Permits students with anaphylaxis in public or private schools to self-administer prescribed medications for allergic reactions when at school, at a school-sponsored activity, or before or after normal school activities while on school properties. Takes effect upon passage and approval of the governor. (HB 90)

School accountability: Requires that a student's test scores be counted in the accountability index of a school if the student was or is enrolled in the school for at least 100 days prior to the beginning of the statewide testing window, in the accountability index of a district if the student is enrolled in the district for at least 100 days prior to the beginning of the statewide testing window, and in the accountability index of the state if the student is enrolled in a Kentucky public school prior to the beginning of the statewide testing window. (HB 176)

School dropouts: Excludes from a school's annual dropout rate a student enrolled and making satisfactory progress in a district-operated or district-contracted General Educational Development (GED) program, a student who withdraws from school and obtains a GED diploma by Oct. 1 of the following year, or a student who has not been enrolled for 30 days. (HB 178)

Juvenile offenders: Allows a youth who is a sex offender registrant to reside within 1,000 feet of a school or licensed day-care facility if he or she is probated or paroled as a juvenile or while enrolled in a secondary education program. (HB 550)

School zone traffic fines: Doubles the traffic fines for speeding in a school zone where the speed limit has been lowered and flashing lights have been installed. (SB 85)

School employees

Service credit for Head Start teachers: Permits members of the Kentucky Teach-



Photo by Rick McComb

Persuasive payoff

Elkhorn Middle School student Erin Hellmann, center, her teacher, Pam Jackson, and members of Erin's class spent a Saturday morning with Pat Day, one of America's most successful jockeys, before he raced at Keeneland. The Franklin County student wrote a persuasive letter to Day asking him to speak to her class about his life and profession. Day invited the class to the Lexington racetrack where he talked with the students and signed posters.

ers' Retirement System to purchase service credit for Head Start experience under the same conditions that out-of-state service credit may be purchased. (HB 36)

Classified employees' sick leave: Requires a board of education to provide a minimum of 10 days of paid sick leave each school year to full-time classified employees.

Employment of retired teachers: Reduces the percentage of retirees an employer may hire from 4 percent to 3 percent of the employer's work force and requires local school districts to make requests to exceed the quota no sooner than two weeks after the start of the school year. Establishes a critical shortage program that allows a local board to employ retired members in full-time or part-time teaching or administrative positions without limitation on the compensation of the retired members. The superintendent may fill the position when there are no other qualified applicants. The number of retired members shall not exceed two members per local district, or 1 percent of the total active members whichever is greater. Members returning to work are subject to separation-from-service requirements. Local school districts shall make annual payments to the retirement system on the compensation paid to the reemployed retirees. Authorizes the department to reemploy retired members in critical shortage areas at the Kentucky School for the Blind, Kentucky School for the Deaf and the Kentucky Virtual High School. (HB 434)

Certified employees called to active military service: Permits a board of education to provide the employer's contribution for family health insurance and make payment to the Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System for service credit if the certified employee is called to active military duty and commits to returning to work in the school district upon conclusion of the leave. Requires the employee to receive service credit for salary purposes for time

spent in active military service. Permits a local board to require a one-year probation if the leave credit qualifies the employee for a continuing contract and proper notice is given. (HB 551)

Finance

School finance: Makes the Revenue Cabinet the collector for the local utility gross receipts license tax at a fee not to exceed 1 percent. Taxes collected by the Revenue Cabinet are distributed monthly and remain the property of the levying school district. Effective July 1, 2005 (HB 163)

Local taxation: Clarifies definition of tax district and standardizes rules for local taxation of businesses, except the utilities gross receipts taxes levied by school districts. (HB 458)

Studies

Study of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System: Directs the Office of Education Accountability, under the direction of the Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee (EAARS), to conduct a study of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System. Requires the Kentucky Department of Education to provide analysis of data and information for the study. A written draft report will be made by Sept. 15 to EAARS. With its approval, the report will go to the Legislative Research Commission and the Interim Joint Committee on Education. (SJR 156)

Health insurance study: Directs the Personnel Cabinet and Kentucky Group Health Insurance Board to study the feasibility of establishing a health reimbursement arrangement for state employees. Findings will be submitted to the governor, General Assembly and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court by Oct. 1. (HJR 207)

Design your own arts PD

Native American storytelling, West African art, Asian music, Latin American dance — the diversity of cultural arts included in Kentucky's Core Content for the Arts and Humanities is exciting and more than a little intimidating. It also can be hard for teachers to find authentic arts activities that truly reflect the values and traditions of so many different cultures. Until now.

This summer the Kentucky Arts Council is introducing a professional development opportunity for arts and humanities teachers, arts specialists, social studies teachers, classroom generalists, special education teachers, language arts teachers, library media specialists, parent coordinators and family resource and youth services center directors. Any educator interested in teaching about the arts through culture and teaching the cultures through the arts is encouraged to attend.

The seminar is July 18 - 20 at the Kentucky Leadership Center in Faubush. Participants receive 12 hours of professional development credit for attending four workshops.

Participants can select from a smorgasbord of sessions to design their own professional development experience. Only interested in music? Then take four ses-

sions of music from different cultures.

Want to experience folk and Appalachian culture through different art forms? Combine sessions on Appalachian folk dance, music, storytelling and quilting.

Or pick and choose to suit yourself. Each session will include a writing activity and discussion of the relevant core content and open-response questions.

Registration for the sessions is \$180, which includes lodging, meals, snacks and resource materials. Discounts for registration are available for teaching teams. Registration deadline is June 1.

Participants will be immersed in hands-on cultural arts experiences interspersed with information about how to engage students in writing about arts and culture, how to develop open-response questions and how to access arts resources and grants. Professional artists who have worked in school settings through the council's Artist in Residence and Teacher Initiated Projects will lead the activities.

For more information or to register online, go to <http://artscouncil.ky.gov/Education/aiehome.htm>. Contact John S. Benjamin, (888) 833-2787, Ext. 4813; John.Benjamin@ky.gov.

Dance Arts Toolkit available

Kentucky schools can place orders now for copies of a newly developed Dance Arts Toolkit that will be released in June. The toolkit is a multimedia resource aligned to Kentucky's academic standards in arts and humanities. It offers a variety of resources geared to the specific needs of primary, intermediate, middle and high school teachers.

The toolkit includes eight hours of video showing teachers modeling lessons in creative movement and performances by many Kentucky artists that can be used in classrooms. The toolkit also contains lesson plans, glossaries, a dance timeline poster and Internet links for information on topics such as dance careers.

"The Dance Arts Toolkit is a valuable resource for generalists as well as arts and humanities and dance specialists," said Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit.

The Dance Arts Toolkit is the second of four Arts Toolkits being developed collaboratively by the Department of Education, Kentucky Educational Television (KET), The Kentucky Center, the Kentucky Arts Council and other organizations in

response to teacher requests. The Drama Arts Toolkit was released last year, and copies are still available. Toolkits are being developed for the visual arts and music. Some resources are available online at www.ket.org/artstoolkit.

KET is now taking orders for the Dance Arts Toolkit with delivery beginning in June. The cost per toolkit is \$89 plus shipping. Discounts are available for multiple-copy orders.

For more information or to receive an order form, send e-mail to KET's Teresa Day at artstoolkit@ket.org or call toll free (800) 945-9167, or contact the Department of Education's Arts and Humanities consultant, Phil Shepherd, pshepher@kde.state.ky.us, (502) 564-2106. A printable order form is available at www.ket.org/artstoolkit by clicking on "Dance Toolkit now available."



Photo by Rick McComb

Star-Spangled Trio

Fulton (Independent) Superintendent Brenda Mahan, right, her husband Bobby Mahan and Principal Dianne Owen offer a musical salute to the early 1940s during production of "Kilroy Was Here" at Fulton High School in April. The play was the culminating activity for a year-long study of the World War II era that involved faculty, staff, high school students and community members.

Dance and drama PD in June

Interested in learning more about integrating the arts into your classroom, but reluctant to drive several hours to a major city for a summer professional development session?

You can sign up now for a distance learning arts PD session at one of eight sites throughout the commonwealth and learn how to use the KET Dance and Drama Toolkits in your classroom. Teachers do not have to have either toolkit to participate in the sessions. Materials will be provided.

The drama PD session will be June 1 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. (EDT)/ 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. (CDT). Antoinette Crawford-Willis, Kentucky Arts Council roster artist and Kentucky Alliance for Arts Education board member, will facilitate the session.

The dance PD session will be June 3 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. (EDT)/ 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. (CDT). University of Kentucky dance professor Rayma Beal and dance profes-

sional Marianne McAdam, Eastern Kentucky University, both Alliance board members, will facilitate the session.

Site locations include the primary site at the Center for Rural Development in Somerset as well as Lindsey Wilson College, Columbia; Garrard County High School, Lancaster; Paintsville High School; Hindman Community College; Carroll County High School, Carrollton; and Murray State University.

For the latest information about site locations, fees, registration form and deadline, visit www.kyartsed.org or inquire by e-mail to staff@kyartsed.org. Professional development credit is available.

These PD sessions are offered by the Kentucky Alliance for Arts Education in partnership with the Center for Rural Development, the Kentucky Arts Council, the Kentucky Department of Education, Kentucky Educational Television, and the Kentucky Center.

Textbook reviewers and commission members needed

The Kentucky Textbook Commission is looking for new committee members and textbook reviewers. Kentucky educators, parents and community members may apply for the positions.

The state textbook commission oversees the adoption process for textbooks and instructional materials for public school students. The commission meets four times a year — in April, July, September and December.

Each commission member serves a four-year term and receives a \$50 stipend per meeting and reimbursement for travel, meals and lodging expenses. Substitute reimbursement is provided to districts for educators who serve on the commission.

This year, reviewers will examine arts and humanities textbooks and instruc-

tional materials, both print and electronic, for grades P-12. The arts and humanities content area includes visual arts, music, world languages, theatre, dance and humanities.

Reviewers will meet June 22 in Frankfort for an organizational meeting and to construct the evaluation tool for arts and humanities resources. The weeklong review will be held July 19-23 at Bate Middle School in Danville.

For more information on becoming a commission member or a textbook reviewer, contact Blenda Fields, textbook/instructional resources consultant for the Kentucky Department of Education, by e-mail at bfields@kde.state.ky.us or by phone at (502) 564-6952.

Early childhood center's environment nurtures and prepares children for future learning

By Joy Barr

jbarr@kde.state.ky.us

The best early childhood programs actively engage children so they will gain the skills and knowledge they need to enter elementary school ready to achieve and excited about learning.

The Anderson County Early Childhood Center in Lawrenceburg (ECC) has created a unique learning environment that helps prepare young minds to thrive as they get ready to enter elementary school.

The center provides half-day kindergarten and preschool programs for children ages 2 1/2 years to 6 years. The ECC uses developmentally appropriate practices to meet the needs of all its students.

The center is one of two in Kentucky that contain only preschool and kindergarten. Other districts have different configurations of preschool only, or preschool and kindergarten.

"We believe all children learn and develop the confidence to succeed through a unique,

nurturing environment. Having a whole school devoted to early childhood allows us to focus on best practice for young children," said Principal Melissa Monts.

"We are laying the building blocks for children to be socially competent, active learners, with a solid foundation for future academic endeavors," she added.

According to Monts, the Anderson County early childhood program is designed to be developmentally appropriate for young children. Curriculum and activities focus on each child's physical, intellectual, social and emotional development, including interpersonal, intrapersonal and socialization skills.

The ECC was created in 1996 to alleviate overcrowding in Anderson County's elementary schools. A practical solution evolved into a great idea. What started as five kindergarten classes and three preschool classes has grown into a school with seven kindergarten classes and nine preschool classrooms, Monts said.

Each day more than 500 students come through the building. The center also provides a wrap-around daycare for participating students.

The ECC program is accredited by the National Association of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This accreditation is awarded

only to programs of the highest quality, which meet rigorous standards in the areas of staff, learning environment and curriculum.

The preschool program uses the High Scope model in their classrooms, Monts said. Each teacher carefully prepares the environment for interaction with the students. The teachers also work on pro-social behaviors such as following a routine, cooperation and empathizing with others. Each preschool class uses an

early literacy curriculum called Break-through to Literacy. This research-based program focuses on early reading skills.

This school year, the preschool program started a pilot project using an online assessment called Child Observation Record (COR). Teachers post daily student assessment information on COR that parents can access. Through an online COR journal, teachers and parents can correspond immediately rather than only during scheduled progress

report times.

The center's colorful classrooms are inviting and exciting. Learning centers invite exploration and excite the senses. Activities are designed to help students develop their speech and language, motor skills, cognitive thinking and social and adaptive behavior. Every aspect of the program at the ECC touches on these areas of early development.

The kindergarten curriculum uses a variety of instructional practices. "An extensive array of developmentally appropriate mathematics, phonics, letter recognition, pre-reading and writing curriculum are used," said Amy Martin, ECC curriculum resource teacher. Each kindergarten student has classes in music, art, library and physical education. Science and social studies are built into the themes in conjunction with the literacy and phonics programs.

An essential element at the ECC is the interaction between the teachers, the children and their families. This age is when young children are developing the basic foundation skills needed for life. The strong bonds formed between teachers and students allow trust and affection to make a child's first school experience feel safe and secure.

The support and a sense of trust have created strong relationships within the



Kindergarten teacher Faye O'Nan plays a game of shapes and colors with her students.

Photo by Rick McComb



Photo by Rick McComb

Student Ally Larkin serves a pretend breakfast to three cyclists on the preschool playground.

center. "The entire staff is focused on the well being of each child," said Sonny Fentress, superintendent of Anderson County Schools. "We hold ourselves accountable so that each child is prepared to enter first grade."

The ECC also houses a Regional Training Center (RTC) for teachers in the early childhood education field. Practicing teachers come for training in best practices. The RTC also houses a resource library for anyone working in early childhood education.

Preservice education students from the University of Kentucky and Midway College do their student teaching at the ECC. Having a whole school devoted to the education of young learners gives future teachers a supportive environment without competition for resources that can occur in more traditional programs, Monts said.

For more information about Anderson County's ECC, contact Melissa Monts, (502) 839-2504; mmonts@anderson.k12.ky.us.

Kentucky ranks in Top 10 for preschool availability

In the National Institute for Early Education's annual report, "The State of Preschool: 2003 State Preschool Yearbook," Kentucky is listed among the nation's 10 best states at making preschool available for its children. It commends the state for small classes and low student-teacher ratios.

The report states that too many students throughout the country enter elementary school academically and socially unprepared. This increases their chances of eventually dropping out of school and engaging in delinquent behavior, according to the report.

Good-quality preschool programs, according to the report, have the opposite effect, decreasing the need for special education services and grade retention, increasing test scores, and eventually leading to increased college enrollment and salaries.

Kentucky's preschool education programs are available for all 4-year-olds who are eligible for free lunch; all 3- and 4-year-olds with developmental delays and disabilities (regardless of income); and other 4-year-olds as placements are available.

To download the report, visit the National Institute for Early Education's Web site, www.nieer.org.

Visual props help inspire students to better writing

By Nan Ternes

Hopkins County Schools

Several years ago I started using visual props in my 7th-grade language arts classes to motivate students to write. I was amazed at how connecting by sight and touch with everyday items helped my students better develop language and ideas in their short stories.

The idea for using visual props in my class began one day as I was browsing at the local Goodwill store. I spotted a lace shawl and a long sleeve, ruffled blouse. I located a dark floral skirt to complete the ensemble and headed home with my “treasures,” planning to use them to stimulate my students in an upcoming writing assignment.

The next day, I set the mood by turning off the lights in the classroom. Speaking very softly, I told the story about a friend who found a box in the attic of an old house that contained three pieces of clothing, folded neatly and wrapped in tissue paper. Lying on top was an old, brass compass engraved with the letters “U.S.” (I previously had purchased the compass at an antique mall.)

I displayed the outfit to the class. We began to brainstorm about the previous owners, while I passed the shawl and compass around for the students to feel and examine.

As students examined the items, I asked questions such as: Who could have worn this outfit? (Teacher, messenger during the war, gypsy fortune teller, runner with the Underground Railroad, etc.) What about the compass? (A loved one, a soldier, someone’s husband, etc.)

These items sparked their imagination and creativity, and the students began to write. While writing, several students asked to examine the compass or shawl more carefully.

The following fiction story, written by Emma Jones, a former student of mine, illustrates the rich images and creativity that visual props have elicited from some of my students. After examining the props, Emma decided the owner of the box was a woman named Mary Jane Smith who volunteered to be a message carrier during a war. She describes in detail the night when she is sent to warn her husband, a general in the army, about the enemy’s impending arrival at his campsite.

My name is Mary Jane Smith. When my husband was drafted, I decided to help with this war as much as I could. As I didn’t have any children or a job, it would have been a very dull, boring life and too safe for me. I’m not like my friends, I like adventure, I like power. When no one volunteered to be a message carrier, I decided to try it.

Everyone warned me that this would be a very dangerous job, and I knew that. That’s why I tried, and that’s why I am dying.

It was easy at first. All I had to do was find camps and give the men the letters that their families had written. I was kind to them and many read me the notes from their children, and wives, and parents. They were all the same; people saying that they loved them and that they prayed for them. They were hopeful the war would soon end.

But then, the enemy started pushing farther into our country. The camps that had been so close were now very far. I had to travel at night most of the time, with only my compass, and wearing a dark dress that blended in with the night.

I no longer carried letters, but orders, orders to the generals. Most of them were written, but some, I had to relay from memory. Of those nights, most were very alike. They weren’t too difficult, but very scary. As I look back on all those many nights, only last night looks back at me.

“Mary Jane!” the General barked.

“Yes sir?” I answered, standing straight.

“I have found the enemy’s pattern. You must go tell General Smith that he needs to move approximately two miles North of where he is currently positioned. He should be able to defeat them there, if the reinforcements have arrived.

“Yes sir!” I saluted him and grabbed my compass as I plunged into the darkness of the night. I knew my husband’s camp well, as I had been there many times, although I had only gone at night but a few.

Luckily, it was a clear sky with a full moon, so I didn’t have much trouble reading my compass. I had to travel through a forest and around a lake to arrive at the camp.

I had just reached the forest when I heard it, footsteps. The footsteps of many men, coming nearer.

I moved behind a tree, so that it stood between the troop and me. Except for the footfalls, they were silent. I wasn’t entirely sure if they were friend or foe, but I didn’t take any chances.

A small animal of some sort, jumped out of the tree I was behind, and broke a twig as it landed. The footsteps stopped suddenly. They didn’t seem to take any more chances than I did. I stood completely still. A single shot rang out, going right by the tree. The noise was so loud I almost fell. As I grabbed the tree to keep my balance, a piece broke off the trunk. Several more shots pierced the blackness. I realized then that some footsteps had started again, this time headed right for me. I knew I had to protect myself.

Slowly, I brought one foot up behind me and placed it on the trunk, my heart pounding. I put that foot in a secure place on the tree, and used it to push myself upward. I used my hands to help keep me balanced, and kept going up the tree.

You see, I have no brothers and my father was handicapped, so I had to do



Photo by Rick McComb

Nan Ternes uses a variety of props to help students at Browning Springs Middle School develop language and ideas in their short story writing.

all the work on the farm, making me very strong, and able to climb that tree backwards, in almost absolute silence.

I was able to get to a safe spot to sit down, as several men came around, looking for me.

“It may have been nothing but a mere animal,” one man whispered in rough English. Another man responded, in a language I could not understand. Other men looked around, some pointing rifles to be safe. A few looked into the tree, but I had the darkness to hide me. Suddenly, an owl landed next to me.

I swear, the animals want me dead, I thought. The owl’s movement caught the eye of one man. He put his rifle on his shoulder with lightning speed. Nothing but pure self-control at the maximum had kept me from screaming as sheer pain went through my hand. Luckily, the man gave up as he saw the owl fly away. The men went back to their troop and the footsteps started again. As they got farther away, I dropped out of the tree, tears streaming down my face from the pain. I lay down in the old rotting leaves for a while before pulling out a handkerchief and bandaging my hand. I started again on my way.

I moved silently and cautiously and finally reached the camp. John, my husband was the first to see me.

“Mary Jane! What happened? Are you alright?” he asked urgently. I told him about the troop and he led me to the nurses’ station. I was still crying. A kind nurse stopped what she was doing and bandaged my hand properly. I told John what the General had said, but told him also that I thought he was too late. After a little rest, I was willing to go back, but John forbade it.

“I’m not letting you get hurt again, Mary Jane,” he said.

“General Smith, General Smith!” yelled a soldier as he ran into the nurse’s station. “The enemy has just been spotted, not half a mile east from here!”

“Alert everyone! We must go face them!” John said. The soldier nodded and ran

outside. The camp was suddenly flooded with light. There was a lot of shouting. I ran along side John and grabbed a rifle.

“Mary Jane! What in hell do you think you’re doing? You can’t fight!” he yelled at me.

“Yes I can, and I will!” I yelled back. It was like something possessed me. I don’t recall any of the battle after that. All I remember is waking up here, back at the nurses’ station.

“You took a bullet, pushing General Smith out of the way,” one nurse told me. Another said that they had called for medicine, but it probably won’t get here in time.

So, I’m writing this for future generations.

I tried to help.

I hope we win.

And John, dear John, I just wanted to let you know, I...

I highly recommend this technique as a means of evoking students’ creativity. The resulting student work is consistently rich with details, ideas and emotions that often are not achieved with written or spoken writing prompts.

Getting visual props is easy. Search attics, garage sales, flea markets, Goodwill stores, Salvation Army outlets and antique malls for that unique item. You may have something at home that would engage your students.

Students do appreciate the effort to make writing an interesting assignment. As one student explained in a reflective writing, “My teacher uses visual props to stimulate my imagination and my creativity. They help me to stay focused by seeing and touching the things as I develop my stories.”

Nan Ternes is a 7th-grade language arts teacher at Browning Springs Middle School in Hopkins County. Contact her at nternes@hopkins.k12.ky.us; (270) 825-6006.

(This article is reprinted with permission of “Kentucky English Bulletin,” 2004 Winter/Spring edition, John Hagaman, editor.)

North Pointe School reaps benefits from PTA partners

By Joy Barr

jbarr@kde.state.ky.us

The word volunteer, Webster's Dictionary tells us, means "to serve or act of one's own free will." Studies of successful Kentucky public schools show they welcome volunteers and encourage the additional support and assistance.

North Pointe Elementary is an example of such a school. Dedicated parents, grandparents and many others from the community give of their time and talents to help students achieve.

The Boone County school building is just four years old. What Principal David Thompson describes as merely a new, empty building is now filled with murals painted by students, teachers and volunteers and displays of student work. The many hours of volunteer time have helped the staff transform the building into a school, he said.

"What makes the building a school is all the people working together focusing on the child," said Thompson. "Excellent schools are created through the dedication of superintendents, principals, teachers, parents and community members who are passionate about student success."

Because of parent involvement, North Pointe was named a National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Parent Involvement School of Excellence. Seven Kentucky schools have achieved the designation.

The national PTA recognizes schools that uphold the highest standards in parent involvement with the designation. It bases the honor on six standards: communication, parenting, student learning, volunteering, school decision-making and collaborating with the community. Schools apply to the National PTA to be considered for designation based on certain criteria. The award is a three-year designation.

From chaperoning field trips to stuffing folders, parents contribute greatly at the school in the Hebron community. Missy Bell, North Pointe's PTA president, is a very active proponent of the school. She

and many others help wherever they are needed. They help classroom teachers by handling many non-teaching tasks so teachers can focus on instruction. More than 8,000 volunteer hours were logged last year (2002-2003) at North Pointe.

"The entire community is focused on one mission: the well-being of children and their needs," said Thompson. "We will provide a safe and rewarding learning experience. We believe that all children can learn and in that effort, we will do whatever it takes to ensure their success."

North Pointe also has established a Business and Education Standing Together (BEST) school-community partnership with McDonald's and Hebron First Financial Bank, both major contributors to the success of the students and school.

At the school, many believe that parent and family involvement has helped to increase student achievement and success. The school's Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) academic index is 87.9. That is 7.7 points above the school's index goal for 2003 as it strives for an overall goal of 100, or proficiency, by 2014. With parents closely involved, students exhibit a more positive attitude and behavior, administrators and parents agree. The faculty and staff have made it easy to volunteer by willingly accepting help from parents. The school holds an annual parent volunteer night where teachers display projects for which they need help. Students and parents come for refreshments and to sign up to help with the projects or to provide supplies. Many teachers provide materials at the event so parents can work on the projects at their homes.

"When parents and other visitors enter schools like North Pointe, they are welcomed and made to feel that their presence is appreciated and their work is meaningful and valuable," said Janice Jackson, president of Kentucky PTA.

The school's PTA provides programs that involve both students and parents.



Photo by Rick McComb

North Pointe Elementary PTA President Missy Bell works with Jacob Woosley on his cursive writing as part of her volunteer work at the school.

Some examples include Kentucky Kids Day, Santa's Workshop, Family Days, Panther Awards for excellence in behavior and attitude, a carnival, a talent show, and a mother/son, father/daughter dance. The PTA also prints a weekly newsletter

and capitalizes on events to recognize teachers and students.

David Thompson and Missy Bell can be reached by phone at (859) 334-7000. Their e-mail addresses are dthompson@boone.k12.ky.us; northpointeptat@fus.net.

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KET will reach more rural schools

Schools and homes in 10 rural eastern Kentucky cities will soon have access to digital programs broadcast by Kentucky Educational Television (KET). A U.S. Department of Agriculture grant of \$619,000 is providing funds to KET for the purchase of boosters to maximize the digital signal across mountainous terrain and along river banks.

The boosters will enable delivery of educational programming to 15,000 students in 12 school

districts, four rural vocational schools and 10 rural adult learning centers and public libraries, according to a KET press release.

The new services will be available to viewers in difficult-to-reach locations in Pineville, Middlesboro, Augusta, Manchester, Barbourville, Louisa, Whitesburg, Vanceburg, Frenchburg and Falmouth.

"Rural Kentucky communities depend on KET for services ranging from educational course

content in their schools to GED instruction, telecourses and safe, education programming for children," said Hilda Gay Legg, administrator of the Agriculture Department's Rural Utility Service, which made the grant.

KET currently provides more than 3,000 hours each year of instructional TV programs to Kentucky's schools, libraries and educational centers, providing standards-based instruction in every major content area.

Handheld computers add excitement to teaching, learning and administration in Laurel County Schools

By Karen Jackson and Diana Creasy
Laurel County Schools

As the bell rings, students approach the teacher to “beam” a completed writing assignment from their handheld computer to the teacher’s handheld device. Once received, the teacher can carry home all 30 documents in a “pocket PC” to read and record comments and suggestions on the student work.

When class resumes, the teacher will “beam” the documents back to the students and assign a date for the finished document. Although this sounds very futuristic, this is the scene in more and more schools across the country — and in Kentucky — thanks to the latest gadget in technology, the handheld computer.

Once associated with offices of the corporate world, this technology is gaining acceptance in classroom instruction. Its popularity and affordability could make a student-to-computer ratio of 1:1 a reality in public schools.

Handheld computers, also known as Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), were once merely high-tech planners and address books. With improved technology, the devices are being adapted for use in K-12 schools. They are portable and relatively inexpensive. Handhelds are helping integrate technology and instruction outside the walls of a computer lab and allowing students to work more efficiently.

Handhelds in the classroom

Educators in Laurel County are committed to implementing this technology at all levels in the district’s schools. Each of the 10 elementary schools has one classroom set of handheld devices. They are loaded with mathematics and science software to foster skills and target improvement in 4th- and 5th-grade classes.

Two sets of the handhelds can be checked out for classroom use at each of the two middle schools and two high schools. Additionally, every teacher at South Laurel Middle and South Laurel High received a handheld device to use in daily instruction and classroom administrative tasks.

In all district schools, the handhelds are inventoried, barcoded and stored in the media centers. Teachers schedule use of the equipment for their classrooms with their library media specialists, reserving the devices just as they would reserve use of the computer lab. The media specialists check out a classroom set and deliver it to the teacher’s classroom.

The handhelds contain all the software programs available to students on classroom and lab computers at each school. Students also can attach collapsible keyboards to the devices to do word processing, complete spreadsheet activities and download articles, short stories or books from the Internet.

Both teachers and students are excited about the new technology. “Students are enjoying the simplicity of using the handheld technology to complete their class work,” said Kimberly Brown, the district’s director of middle school education. “They seem to have more focus when they are using the technology to complete their assignments. Their level of excitement has risen dramatically in the classrooms where the handhelds are being used.”

Darlene Bowling, media specialist at South Laurel High, agrees. “I love the convenience of the PDAs,” she said. “It allows us to bring the technology to the teacher’s classroom and in return service more students. Students love the novelty of the new technology and stop by the library and ask when we are coming to their classrooms! Overall, it has been very positive.”

Handhelds and administrators

Many administrators in the district have purchased pocket PCs to assist them in completing their daily administrative duties. “As administrators we tend to spout the phrase ‘We need to work smarter, not harder,’” said Brown, the district’s middle school education director. “Laurel County administrators are modeling the use of the handhelds by using them in walk-throughs, scheduling, preparing calendars, and writing and recording messages. All methods are enabling our administrators to work ‘smarter and not harder.’”

One of the handheld features administrators like most is the ability to compose e-mails while away from their computers. They can automatically send those e-mails the next time they “sync” with their desktop computer. Administrators also can download their calendars and even schedule new appointments while away from their desktop computers.

“This device has become my right arm!” said Tharon Hurley, principal of Johnson Elementary. “Speeding up the process of classroom walk-throughs and having the ability to provide teachers with immediate feedback have been the greatest benefits of utilizing the technology of a pocket PC.”

Jeff Durham, principal of Keavy Elementary, uses the pocket PC to increase his daily productivity. “One of the most difficult aspects of being a principal is time management. On an average day, it is very common for me to have four to five tasks that need my attention at the same time,” Durham said. “Therefore, any tool that allows me to complete a task faster is worth its weight in gold. My PDA has been that tool; it has allowed me to utilize my time in a more effective manner.”

Debbie Reed, the district’s Title I parent involvement coordinator, carries an up-to-date Parent Volunteer Database on her pocket PC during visits to the 14 schools

she serves. “The district has 2,304 volunteers,” Reed said. “Each of these must complete confidentiality training and have a completed crime check on file. Having the ability to have all of this information at my fingertips, for all 14 schools, has been invaluable.”

For Reed, who has multiple sclerosis, the handheld device has given her more flexibility in completing her work and helped her eliminate the need to travel with enormous amounts of paperwork, or even a laptop. Moreover, the automatic reminders for appointments helps her stay on task and organized, Reed added.

Laurel County School administrators say the use of pocket PCs is opening doors for new ways to approach core content and to integrate technology in the classroom. This technology has quickly become a vital learning tool for students, teachers and administrators throughout the district.

Karen Jackson and Diana Creasy are curriculum and instructional

technology specialists for Laurel County Schools. Contact both at (606) 862-4794 or Jackson by e-mail at kjackson@laurel.k12.ky.us and Creasy at dcreasy@laurel.k12.ky.us.



Photo by Rick McComb

Handhelds, training available to administrators

The Kentucky Department of Education’s Office of Leadership and School Improvement is working to provide handheld technology to Kentucky administrators interested in moving from pen and paper classroom observation tools to electronic format. Kentucky principals and superintendents have the opportunity through the Gates Foundation to participate in a leadership activity to learn to use the handheld devices and put its functions into practice for classroom observation and other tasks. (See story on this page to discover how Laurel County administrators are using handheld devices in their work.)

Regional training will be held for school and district leaders on using the handheld devices and software for classroom observations and other tasks. Support will be offered by peer mentors across the state, as well as through online participation.

The use of this technology and other productivity software supports administrators in meeting new technology standards. Kentucky adopted the Technology Standards for School Administrators (TSSA) during the 2004 legislative session. The standards reflect what P-12 school administrators need to know and do to support technology integration in their schools. To view these standards, go to www.iste.org and follow the “NETS” links.

If you are a principal or superintendent interested in registering for Phase II of the Gates Project, contact Pat Trotter, ptrotter@kde.state.ky.us; (502) 564-2116, or John Fields, jfields@kde.state.ky.us; (502) 564-4117, at the Kentucky Department of Education.

Library program helps students unlock America's past

By Barbara Townsend

Fairview Independent Schools

With a fixed schedule and no specified collaboration time, my classes at the Fairview Elementary library seemed disconnected to anything that was going on in the regular classrooms. However, work on attaining a rank change through the Continuing Education Option (CEO) program has reestablished some collaborative efforts and classroom connections. My way of teaching information literacy skills has done a complete 180-degree turn.

As a result of this new focus on literacy skills and the need to increase our scores in social studies, Fairview 5th graders found a new library program in place when school began this past fall. I began teaching library skills through enriching the content students would be learning in their history classes with the use of historical fiction picture books and projects.

When our faculty reviewed our social studies test scores, they were lower than the state average in the social studies sub-domain of history. I began looking at ways to use United States history as a major content area to incorporate research-based teaching strategies in my classes. Rather than a supplement to the regular classroom, I decided to teach mini-units in scheduled library classes incorporating research-based teaching practices, information literacy skills and U.S. history content.

Last year, I attended a weeklong training called "Intel Teach to the Future." During this week, my unit, "Unlocking the Secrets to the Past Using Historical Fiction Picture Books" fell into place. I began planning the unit using BIG6 Information Literacy Skills. The major components of the plan included good historical fiction literature and use of technology.

The 5th-grade history core content provided the major time periods/eras to cover in my lessons. After discussing content needs with the 5th-grade teachers and considering the amount of scheduled library time I would have with the students, I chose four time periods: Colonial, American Revolution, Westward Expansion and the Civil War.

Each of these mini-units is set up in the same fashion.

Students take a pretest (consisting of multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank and open-response questions).

A chart is used throughout the unit to show KWLH: What students know, What they want to know, How they are going to find that information and What they have learned.

The time period/era is introduced through a PowerPoint presentation that highlights major events, people and important facts that we will be covering during the unit.

Students read a variety of historical fiction picture books and discuss them (fact vs. opinion, fact vs. fiction, location skills and verification of information, etc.).

I provide guiding questions to help stu-



Photo by Rick McComb

Fairview (Independent) Elementary library media specialist Barbara Townsend offers 5th-grader Katrina Bo some assistance in preparing her diorama depicting the colonial period in American history. Townsend taught information library skills through history as part of her work to attain a rank change through the Continuing Education Option program.

dents in their research. (Students use the BIG6 steps in researching.) Students are encouraged to access a variety of relevant Web sites through our library Web page.

At the end of each mini-unit, students choose a project to complete in a cooperative learning group: a mobile, quilt, diorama, artifact box, timeline, postcards or comic strip. Rubrics are provided for each project.

Students complete a posttest.

Students choose one time period we have researched and in cooperative groups complete a PowerPoint presentation about the era.

After all mini-units are completed, the students participate in a culminating event — a wax museum in which students wear clothing representative of the time period studied. They showcase their projects and PowerPoint presentations. Each group completes a background collage of information learned. As other classes, parents and visitors walk through the museum, students teach about their time periods.

These activities address academic expectations, core content, program of studies and national standards for history, as well as American Library Association Information Literacy Standards, experienced teacher standards and ISTE/NETS Teacher Technology Standards.

I also include music and poetry in the mini-units. I use music from singer

Johnny Horton and the Wulfe Brothers, a Louisville group that performs in schools. I also use two resources from Scholastic: "Teaching American History with Favorite Folk Songs" and "American History Poems."

To encourage school and community involvement, I partnered with our Family Resource Center and invited the public to two events at our school. The Wulfe Brothers performed for our preschool through 12th graders and used 60s and 70s music to teach a history lesson.

Dave and Pat Sargent, authors of the "Saddle Up" series visited our elementary school. Their short chapter books tell about specific events in history from a horse's point of view. For example, Paul Revere's horse tells about his midnight ride. I use the books as introductions to events throughout the unit.

This approach to teaching library skills through history seems to be working with all the 5th-grade students. The pretest scores for our study of Colonial times

averaged 32 percent. When asked to name the 13 original colonies, the average student could only name one. However, on the posttest, students scored an average of 88 percent and — on average — could name 12 colonies.

I've begun to use similar activities in my other classes. My 4th-grade class has completed a Kentucky ABC book as a PowerPoint presentation. The 6th-grade class will study the Industrial Revolution and the 20th Century. Primary students will be looking at an array of historical fiction to give them a good foundation to U.S. history.

Participating in the CEO process this year has been rewarding not just for me but also for my students. However, this first year of the mini-units has been a trial and error phase. I expect to revise and add to the lessons to provide a better learning experience for all my students next year.

Contact: Barbara Townsend, btownsen@fairview.k12.ky.us, (606) 325-1528

Resources on the Web

The Kentucky Department of Education's Web site offers links to many of the standards and information literacy skills mentioned in this story. Also available is a link to "Beyond Proficiency: Essentials of a Distinguished Library Media Program," which suggests guidelines for high-quality library media programs in Kentucky. To access this information, go to www.education.ky.gov and enter "library media" in the keyword/search box, then click.

Knox County I-teams are focused on improving teaching and learning

By Cathy Lindsey

clindsey@kde.state.ky.us

You may have heard the term “I-teams” used on TV newscasts. These investigative teams of reporters go out in search of the latest news to bring directly to you, the viewer.

The “I-teams” in the Knox County school district are not that different from those TV counterparts. In an effort to improve teaching and learning district-wide, “Instructional Teams,” of teachers and administrators, are seeking out the latest effective teaching strategies and are bringing them into the classrooms to their students, the learners.

“The collaboration and interaction of our instructional teams provide an effective structure for a professional learning community,” said Knox County superintendent Michael Jay Jones. “These efforts enable us to sustain school improvement by merging theory and practice to impact student learning.”

The I-team concept began in December 2002. The initial training included each school principal, two I-team leaders from each school, and a school liaison. “This year we have focused our learning on targeted, specific, research-based strategies,” said Malena Bingham, Knox County assistant superintendent.

Instructional teams are attending an ongoing series of professional development provided by Silver, Strong and Associates consultant Joyce Jackson. The I-team members function much as a district-wide learning club, familiarizing themselves with the research.

They practice the strategies and tools within their own classrooms and then serve as coaches and mentors to colleagues. They call this learning from the “PROS” — learning from their Practice, Research, Others and Self.

Each school principal and their I-team leaders plan a combination of after-school professional development sessions, learning club meetings and opportunities for common planning of thoughtful lessons with other faculty members.

Knox County educators work with Jackson to identify “Best Bets” using school data and needs assessment. This year the I-teams’ focus has been on Compare and Contrast, Reading for Meaning, Inductive Learning, Note Making and Summariz-



Photo by David Cole, Knox County Schools

G.R. Hampton Elementary teacher Joetta Gaunt guides her P-3 students in a discussion of two books using strategies from her I-team training in Knox County schools.

ing, Vocabulary and Write to Learn.

The training provides teachers and administrators with research-based tools and strategies that address the diverse learning styles and multiple intelligences of all students. “Much progress has been made in the district,” according to Jackson. “The I-teams are intentional and purposeful in planning well-constructed lessons that keep students’ needs, standards and research in mind.”

Awareness training is the I-teams’ first exposure to each strategy. I-team members experience the strategy as Jackson models it.

The benefit of this perspective is two-fold, according to Doris Mitchell, Knox County school improvement coordinator. “Teachers gain an idea of the cognitive processes that students experience,” she explained, “and the teachers are able to see all the right moves to use when they later employ the strategy.”

During the application stage, or learning from practice, the I-team members are given six weeks to go back to their own classrooms and find appropriate lessons in which to use each strategy. Jackson assists teachers in planning their lessons using the new strategies.

“We want teachers to design lessons that are more thoughtful for students,” Jackson said. “Students are more engaged when lessons are planned using strategies that appeal to their learning styles and are built upon brain-based principles.”

During the reflection stage, Jack-

son provides additional support through school visits. She observes I-team teachers using the strategies with their own students, allowing them to reflect upon the new model for instruction before teaching others within their school. “This way they model and mentor on-site,” Mitchell said. “Dr. Silver refers to these interactions as teachers talking to teachers about teaching.”

“The I-teams build a supportive networking system for teachers. People resist change when they feel they are not supported. The mentoring and coaching offered by I-team members removes the feeling of isolation and provides needed support for change,” Jackson explained. “Transformation of schools cannot happen in isolation, teachers need one another to make KERA a reality.”

Mitchell agrees. “Our teachers have told us that this whole extended experience has been one of the most beneficial experiences they have had,” the school improvement coordinator said. “This is truly job-embedded professional development.”

The focus of the work is to improve student achievement, and Mitchell feels the district is moving in the right direction.

“These strategies and tools for learning simply give teachers additional methods to make learning effective. Teachers aren’t necessarily adding new content when using a strategy; instead teachers are teaching their regular content using the new methods whenever applicable,” Mitchell explains. “It is a lot like having a

new tool to construct learning. The better your tools and strategies, the more effective the learning is.”

The Knox County school district will host The Thoughtful Classroom Institute this summer, July 13-14, at Lynn Camp High School near Corbin. Harvey Silver, Richard Strong and Robert Marzano will be the featured presenters. Information about the institute is available at www.thethoughtfulclassroom.com on the Internet.

The combination of Marzano’s research-based strategies for effective instruction with Silver and Strong’s practice-driven approach to thoughtful differentiation will combine in this institute to produce a new model of student learning.

“Teachers should come prepared to learn specific strategies that will provide them with the tools they need to organize more effective lessons, to plan more thoughtful curriculum units and to more effectively manage the change process in every classroom,” said Knox County assistant superintendent Bingham.

Twelve hours of leadership/professional development credit have been approved by the Kentucky Department of Education. Kentucky educators can register for the Institute online at www.thethoughtfulclassroom.com.

Contact: Doris Mitchell, Knox County school improvement coordinator, (606) 546-3157; dgmitchell@knox.k12.ky.us or Joyce Jackson of Silver, Strong and Associates, JJack62284@aol.com.

Fountain and Gill receive mathematics, science awards

Innovation, humor, expert knowledge of their subjects and an ability to inspire student creativity are among the qualities common to the 95 mathematics and science teachers honored this spring with the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST).

Two Kentucky high school teachers, Sue Fountain and Karen Gill, are among the teachers honored with the 2003 PAEMST designation. The award is the nation's highest commendation for work in the classroom.

Fountain is chair of the mathematics department at Male High School in Jefferson County. She teaches Excel Algebra II and AP Statistics and is sponsor for Mu Alpha Theta, the school's mathematics honor society.

She recently received National Board Certification in adolescent and young adult mathematics, and is a member of the National, Kentucky and Greater Louisville Councils of Teachers of Mathematics. She was a Kentucky finalist for the PAEMST in 1996.

Fountain has been involved in writing practice open-response questions for Jefferson County's CATS (Commonwealth Accountability Testing System) question bank, conducted professional development sessions on open-response writ-

ing and served on a district task force to study ways to improve K-12 mathematics education.

Gill is former chair of the 13-member Science Department at Henry Clay High School. She teaches Advanced Physics and AP Physics II at the Fayette County school.

In 2002, Gill received National Board Certification in adolescent and young adult science. For the past four years, she has served as a mentor with the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program.

She also conducts workshops for local science teachers as part of the Physics Teacher Resource Agent Program of the National Science Foundation and American Association of Physics Teachers. In addition, she works with Newton's Attic, a local program that allows students to develop and test large-scale, hands-on science projects, and with Appalachian Explorers, a summer program for Eastern Kentucky middle school students. She has been a judge for the Kentucky/American Science Fair for the past 10 years.

The National Science Foundation administers the awards program for the White House. The mathematics and science teachers in grades K-6 will be recognized during 2004.

Education exhibit focuses on 100th State Fair

Kentucky school students can learn more about the state's history as the Kentucky State Fair celebrates its 100th fair with a special education display, *Kentucky State Fair 100: The Exhibition*. The fair is Aug. 19-29 in Louisville.

The State Fair exhibition explores the first 100 Kentucky State Fairs. In this interactive learning adventure, students will experience Kentucky history as it is reflected in the state's largest event — the ever-changing Kentucky State Fair. The events, inventions, trends and people that have been significant to the state's history are interwoven with the history of the nation and the world, too.

However, the exhibit is much more than a history lesson. The exhibit, its programs and curriculum materials will cover many topics, from the science behind midway rides to the economics of agriculture and industry. Art, architecture, human rights, politics, fashion and, of course, food are all a part of the fair's rich story.

Teachers can involve their students in "the ultimate field trip" through a wide

array of educational materials, from timelines to computer games to classroom activities. The curriculum materials will be linked to Kentucky's Core Content and the Program of Studies. These resources will be posted on the fair's Web site (www.kystatefair.org) this summer.

Student works will be displayed throughout the education exhibit. Individual students, groups of students and classes are invited to create projects or artwork that interpret the theme: 100 years of the Kentucky State Fair. The deadline for submission is July 15. Entry guidelines and project ideas are posted on the Web site.

Group tours of the exhibit must be booked in advance. Tickets are \$1 for students and accompanying adults. A limited number of tickets will be sold each school tour day. Teachers will want to book early to secure their first choice of days.

Visit www.kystatefair.org and click on "Special Exhibits/Educational Exhibit" for more information and online tour booking. Contact: Alice Timberlake, (502) 367-5212; atimberlake@ksfb.ky.gov.



Photo by Rick McComb

Life below the water line

As part of a Biology class assignment in early spring, Southwestern Pulaski High School student Tyler Moore uses a dip net to look for live species in a creek near the school.

WKU posts KERA Web site

By Rosemary L. Meszaros
Western Kentucky University

The Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) was a landmark piece of legislation upon its passage in 1990. To commemorate next year's 15th anniversary of education reform in Kentucky schools, Western Kentucky University (WKU) has created a KERA Resources Web site.

The site provides links to what has been written about KERA and its impact on Kentucky schools as well as many other KERA resources. The Web address is www.wku.edu/library/kera/index.htm.

The Web site was designed by former WKU librarian Kerry J. Smith to be a convenient place for accessing information on many aspects of education as it relates to KERA. Through nine categories, the site offers links to organizations, governmental entities, documents, reports, assessments, statistics, maps and other educational data.

Visitors to the Web site can link to information about the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS), its predecessor, the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS), and other assessment methods. There also are links to departments of education (other education-reforming states, as well as reports on Kentucky programs and about Kentucky-related topics).

The site offers links to hard-to-find Web sites for educational cooperatives, regional educational laboratories and organizations. The "Search Engines" category is a directory of more than a dozen links to the most popular Web search engines.

The "Education Statistics" category links to statistical compendia. The "Condition of Education" and "Digest of Education Statistics" from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, and individual reports on school financial data, safety and crime are available.

Documents such as "The Kentucky Education Reform Act: a Citizen's Handbook," "Kentucky Schools Directory," school and district profiles, and school report cards can be accessed through the KERA Web site. An online overview of the Perkins and National Direct Student Loan programs gives teachers information on financial aid for higher education.

The "Recent Articles" category provides a list (no links) of published journal, magazine articles and newspaper articles, theses, dissertations and conference papers. Visitors also can search the KERA Bibliographic Database from this category. The database is a collaborative effort of the Kentucky Department of Education, the University of Kentucky (UK) Appalachian Center and the UK Institute on Education Reform.

The "KERA Clippings Archive" describes binders of newspaper clippings collected by WKU's Educational Resource Center between 1990 and 2001. The binders are accessible only in the library.

For more information about the clippings archive, contact members of the WKU KERA Web team, Debbie LaMas-tus at (270) 745-6107 or Rosemary Meszaros at (270) 745-6441; rosemary.meszaros@wku.edu.

Leadership Letter

Compiled by Joy Barr
jbarr@kde.state.ky.us

Four members named to state school board

Gov. Ernie Fletcher has appointed four new members to the Kentucky Board of Education. Because their four-year terms begin April 15, they will participate in the June board meeting.

The new state board members are:

- Bonnie Freeman of Louisville, director of special projects/training at the National Center for Family Literacy. She also led the Head Start Family Literacy Project from 1999 to 2002.

- David Rhodes of Mount Sterling, a member of the Montgomery County Board of Education.

- Janna Vice of Richmond, an associate dean at Eastern Kentucky University's College of Business and Technology and a professor of corporate communication and training.

- David Webb of Brownsville, a retired superintendent of Edmonson and Logan county schools and former mathematics teacher in Edmonson and Warren county schools.

The new board members replace Samuel Robinson and Gail Henson, both of Louisville; Alcie Combs of Pikeville, and Paul Whalen of Fort Thomas.

School Report Cards available online

Kentucky's 2002-2003 School Report Cards are now available online. The documents, which also are mailed directly to the parents and guardians of every Kentucky public school student, may be accessed at the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site (www.education.ky.gov). Enter "report card" in the keyword/search box and click.

Not to be confused with student report cards, the School Report Cards provide information about each Kentucky school, including test performance data, teacher qualifications, student safety, awards, parent involvement and much more.

The report cards are designed to open lines of communication between the school, the homes of its students and the community. The report cards provide an opportunity for schools to highlight their strengths and explain what they are doing to improve.

Contact: Jim Welp, (502) 564-3421; jwelp@kde.state.ky.us

Grants available for local initiatives

For the past two years, the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) has funded two separate initiatives: the formation of local P-16 councils and the des-

ignation of Go Higher communities.

Local P-16 councils bring educators together with civic, business and labor leaders to ensure a seamless system of education from preschool through college. Go Higher communities engage in grass-roots efforts that raise the education level of residents, including, but not limited to, undereducated adults. These two initiatives are now being unified.

The Council is awarding grants of up to \$20,000 to two- or four-year public or independent institutions, local school boards of education or non-profit educational, civic, business or labor groups to carry out one or more of the following projects:

- Forming a local P-16 council or Go Higher community

- Conducting an assessment of local education needs to meet current and future work force demands

- Extending the work of existing local P-16 councils through special initiatives or projects

Contact: Dianne Bazell, (502) 573-1555; dianne.bazell@mail.state.ky.us

www.cpe.state.ky.us/announce/announce_requests_for_proposals.asp

Gap coordinators create monthly online newsletter

The Kentucky Department of Education's Achievement Gap Coordinators provide leadership to school staffs and students and are helping schools improve student performance. Each of the five coordinators targets schools in a specific area of the state, and each has experience with school assistance programs.

A new monthly online GAP newsletter provides updates and information about their efforts to close Kentucky's achievement gaps. As the "eyes and ears" of the department, the coordinators are gathering information about what schools and districts really need to make improvements.

www.education.ky.gov Enter "gap coordinators" in the keyword/search box and click.

Commonwealth Institute looking for parent leaders

The Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership seeks 120 parents interested in improving academic achievement for public school students.

The institute, sponsored by the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, is marking its seventh year of training. To date, 1,153 parents from across Kentucky have been trained.

The institute will be offered in two distinct formats. The 2004 Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership will be held this fall in Shepherdsville and Bowling Green. The Gear Up Kentucky Institute for Parent Leadership will be



Photo by Dean Combs, Creative Services/Commerce Cabinet

Having fun while reducing costs

Students at Harrison Elementary in Fayette County enjoy activities at an energy carnival this spring and review what science coordinator Kim Binzer taught them about energy during the school year. Harrison Elementary is one of three Fayette County schools piloting energy education curriculum provided by the nonprofit Kentucky NEED Project. The district's energy education initiative also targets facilities and low-cost, no-cost changes as ways to reduce energy costs. The district has hired an energy manager, with grant assistance from the Kentucky Division of Energy, to accomplish modest changes in its operating policies that could reap up to 20 percent savings in its annual \$5.6 million energy bill.

held in Richmond and Hazard.

Participants attend training sessions to gain knowledge and skills, and build on experiences as volunteers. They also commit to design and carry out projects involving other parents that will have a lasting impact on student achievement

in their local schools.

For more information and an application, visit www.cipl.org. Selections will be announced May 14.

Contact: (800) 928-2111; cipl@prichardcommittee.org

Changed your address?

Kentucky Teacher receives mailing addresses for all Kentucky certified classroom teachers and administrators from the Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System. If you are currently employed by a Kentucky school, you can change your address in one of two ways:

- by completing a change of address form that can be downloaded from the retirement system's Web site at www.ktrs.org/ktrsresources/MEMinfo/chgaddrnew.htm
- by submitting a written request that includes your old address, new address and your social security number

Mail the form or your own written request to:

Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System
Attn: Tammy Brown
479 Versailles Rd.
Frankfort, KY 40601

If you are not a current teacher or administrator, e-mail your change of address to kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us or send your change of address information in writing to:

Kentucky Teacher
1914 Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero St.
Frankfort, KY 40601

Students use hammers and saws to build on geometry theories



Carlos Rodriguez, a junior at George Rogers Clark High School, uses a miter saw in the construction technology/geometry course at the Clark County Area Technology Center.

Photos by Rick McComb

By Cathy Lindsey

clindsey@kde.state.ky.us

If you stop for a moment and take a look around, you'll find the basics of geometry everywhere. Angles, shapes, lines and planes make up all objects in our surroundings.

Being able to work with these geometric shapes in a real-world setting is helping some Kentucky high school students better understand mathematics concepts. A construction technology/geometry course is giving those students a new perspective on geometry.

"The course of geometry was already, for the most part, being taught in the carpentry courses," said Lisa Willian, Hart County High School geometry teacher. "We just made sure that the program of studies for geometry was completely integrated into the carpentry course and helped to incorporate the correct terminology to what they were already doing." Willian worked with staff in the Department of Education's Divisions of Curriculum Development and Career and Technical

Education to plan the interdisciplinary course.

The 2003 Kentucky high school graduation requirements allow for interdisciplinary courses to substitute for specific academic courses. These courses provide the same academic rigor delivered through a more hands-on approach with real-world applications. Students gain the academic and technical skills required to solve problems in today's workplace.

The construction technology/geometry interdisciplinary course allows high school students to earn a carpentry credit and a geometry credit. To earn the credits, students must take two of three classes — Ceiling and Roof Framing, Site Layout and Foundations, and Floor and Wall Framing — that align with the 23 geometry standards.

Richard Butcher teaches carpentry at the Clark County Area Technology Center. He and George Rogers Clark High School mathematics teacher Wynn Long collaborated to make this interdisciplinary course available in Clark County.

Butcher's students regularly use their geometry and mathematics skills in carpentry class. They redesigned and rebuilt their own classroom. They have built houses in the community and furniture for the school.

"We all learn by doing," Butcher said. "You can't build anything unless geometry is involved."

The students receive an assignment. They then calculate the quantity of needed materials, design a plan and follow the blueprint, measure and cut angles, and eventually construct the project.

"People that do not understand construction fail to realize how much intel-

lectual capability a young person has to have to achieve what we do in this class," Butcher said. "You can't accomplish what these students do without math skills."

This course helps students relate academics to a trade. "Some students need time to attend a Career and Technical Education Program and in many situations may learn better in this classroom versus the traditional geometry setting," explained Larry Helphinstine, a department Career and Technical Education consultant.

Joe Norman, principal of the Clark County Area Technology Center, believes this interdisciplinary course gives students the opportunity to experience success with mathematics in an environment where they might feel more comfortable.

Butcher agrees that offering these credits that count toward graduation is a positive step for his students. "We've got bright kids, but we're losing them because we're boring them to death in the classroom."

"Our students have ownership and pride in what they do," Norman explained. "This helps them work harder and keeps

students interested in school."

Interdisciplinary courses offer students the chance to apply theories and practices other students are learning in a traditional classroom. As Butcher describes, it allows students to use their brains *and* their hands at the same time.

"These students can do the math plus the practical application," Butcher said. "That's the payoff."

Any high school, career and technical center or area technology center can offer this course. At least 10 interdisciplinary courses are available for schools to use.

Additional information about the interdisciplinary courses and curriculum is available on the Department of Education's Web site. Go to www.education.ky.gov and enter the words "Interdisciplinary Courses" in the keyword/search box and click.

Contact: Larry Helphinstine, Career and Technical Education program consultant, (502) 564-3472; lhelphin@kde.state.ky.us or Richard Butcher, Clark County Area Technology Center carpentry teacher, (606) 744-1250; RichardJ.Butcher@mail.state.ky.us.



Students made this design in floor tile as part of their redesign of the classroom at the Clark County Area Technology Center.



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